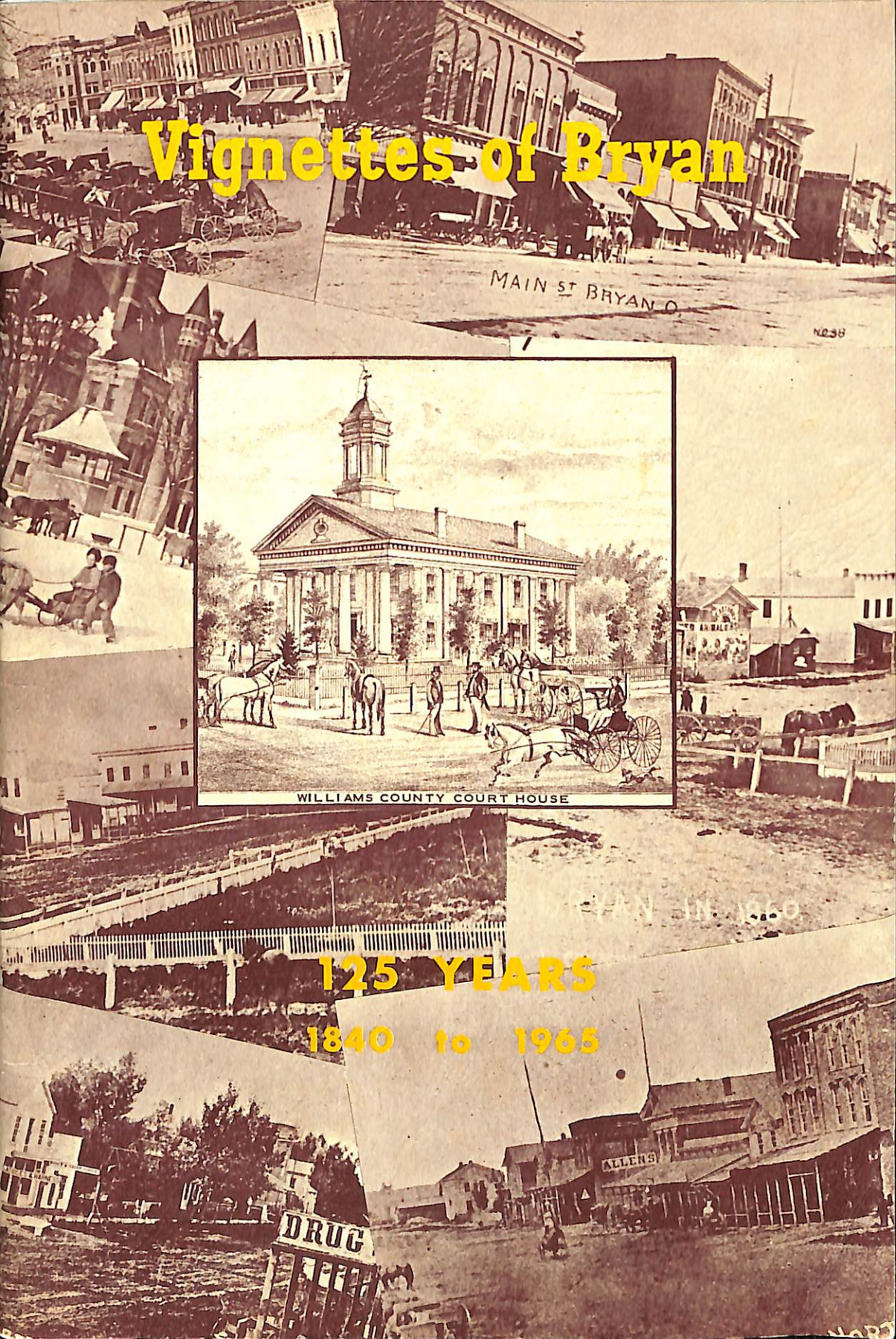
Vignettes of Bryan



125 YEARS

1840 to 1965

Vignettes of Bryan

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Printed and Published by

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FORWARD

This book, which was researched, compiled and published on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the founding of the City of Bryan, Ohio, is intended to record permanently many incidents, both memorable and historical, which have become a part of Bryan's heritage.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the publishers of The Bryan Times for permisison to reprint the "Vignettes of Bryan's 125 Years"; to Robert Lindsey for the use of his fine collection of photographs of Bryan's past; to Betty Wonsetler of the Bryan Times staff; and to Mary Allen of the Bryan Times staff who did the research and who wrote the "Vignettes."

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VIGNETTES OF BRYAN'S 125 YEARS

In the modern, familiar surroundings of Bryan in 1965, it might be difficult to imagine this particular section of Williams County as it appeared to the first settlers some 125 years ago.

In 1840, before the founding of Bryan, there were about three hundred persons living in what is now Williams County, and most of them were scattered around Fayette, now the town of Pulaski. The Indian population had dwindled, and only a few remnants of the Miami, Wyandotte and Pottawattomie tribes remained. They were peaceful, and offered the pioneers no resistance.

The site of the new county seat was a dense forest in a marsh and the virgin timber of the area included white elm, beech, white and burr oak, white ash, sugar and swamp maple, linden, sycamore, black, red and white oak, white wood, black and white walnut, black ash, elm, ironwood and buckeye.

Wild game and waterfowl were abundant, thanks to the conservation policies of the Indians, who killed only enough for food and hides for clothing. For food the early settlers relied on black bear, deer and wild turkey, in addition to small game. Otter, beaver, raccoon and fox pelts provided a medium of exchange, for money was almost non-existent. Wolves, bobcats and panthers were a menace to domestic animals.

Within twenty years the settlers of the region had managed to destroy nearly all the large game animals. Several factors combined to cause the disappearance of game animals, the commercialization of hunting and trapping, the clearing of forests, the drainage of swamps, and the continual westward push of the pioneers, who cleared the land and killed the animals which prowled the land.

The rivers and streams were full of native fish of the region, pike, pickerel, small-mouth and large-mouth bass, crappie, bluegill, catfish, perch, rock bass, warmouth bass and brook trout. The swamps were breeding grounds and feeding places for large variety of waterfowl.

Such was the swampy forest wilderness that the American Land Company of New York owned, and naturally, was desirous of selling. John A. Bryan, agent for the company and State Auditor of Ohio, proposed to the State Legislature that the county seat of the large, sprawling County of Williams in northwestern Ohio be moved from Defiance to a site nearer the geographical center of the county, even though a sparsely populated region. Partisans of Defiance and Pulaski opposed the land speculators proposal, claiming that Bryan wanted to build a court house "near a hackleberry bush under a swamp elm."

Mr. Bryan's powers of persuasion prevailed, and in June, 1840, the county commisioners, acting with the consent of the State Legislature, approved establishment of a new county seat on the speculators land.

Miller Arrowsmith, completed a survey of the townsite in July, 1840, and

North Side of Square in 1860

South Side of Square in 1860

the plat was recorded September 14 of that year. Arrowsmith named the site Bryan, in honor of its promoter.

* * *

The northwest corner of Beech and Butler Streets has been a school site for 120 years, something of a record for longevity for use.

The first school house in the infant town of Bryan was built in 1841, of logs, and was located on the south side of the square. There Miss Harriet Powell conducted a private school for "juvenile pupils." The log cabin later became a public school, with A. J. Tressler as its first schoolmaster.

In 1845 a frame school building was constructed at the corner of Beech and Butler, and Mr. Tressler continued as the teacher, receiving a salary of $15 per month. The average attendance at his school, which covered first grade through high school, was between 25 and 35 pupils.

The newly organized Presbyterian Church and Society, Old School of Bryan, met in the school house from 1854 until their own church was built in 1859.

By 1862 the school had grown to an enrollment of about 225, and was divided into three departments, high, secondary and primary. It was housed in a brick building on the same site, constructed in 1858.

Prof. Charles W. Mykrantz founded the Bryan Normal School, or Mykrantz Academy, in 1864 in a two-story brick building on the corner or North Lynn and Mulberry Sts., and the college continued in operation for 10 years. Classes were conducted on the first floor, and the second floor was used as living quarters for male students. The college started with 40 pupils, and in time the enrollment reached 200, with many of the leading citizens of this area receiving their higher education there.

In 1874 the college was discontinued, and Prof. Mykrantz was named superintendent of the Bryan public schools. He sold his academy building to the Bryan school board, and it was used as a public high school until the former Park School was built in 1885 on Portland Street.

Prof. Mykrantz was considered an outstanding educator. He is credited with developing Emerson Opdycke, "the phenomenal mathematician," and others who distinguished themselves.

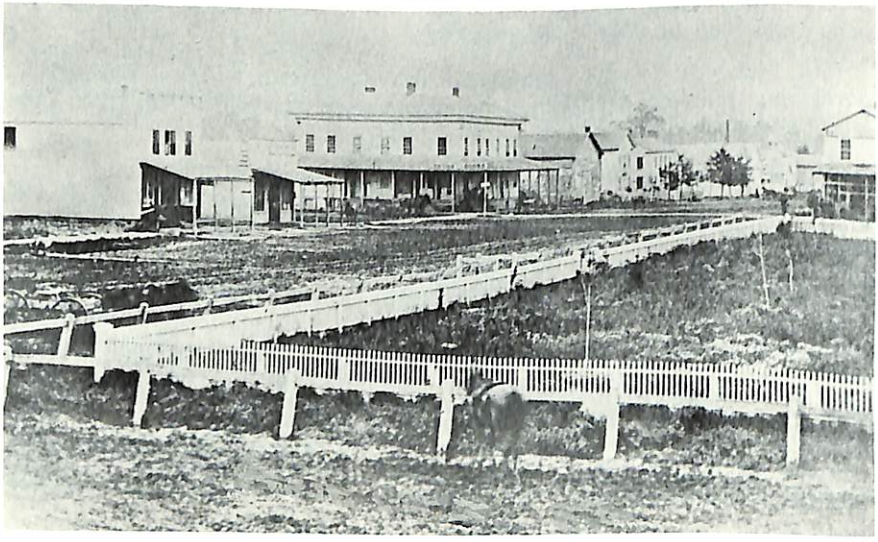
As Bryan's school population increased other grade schools were built, one at the corner of Cherry and Mulberry Sts., and the other on South Walnut St., at the present location of the V.F.W. skating rink. Both schools were torn down when Lincoln School, with 12 class rooms, was built in 1917.

The old high school, now known as the Central building, was constructed in 1903, and was a fine school building of that era. An auditorium and additional classrooms were provided in 1917. The Park School stadium was added in 1936 and the new junior high addition was built in 1938.

Since that time the Lincoln School addition, the Washington Elementary School and the new Bryan High School, with a capacity for 800 students and built on the site of the former Park School, have been added to the educational facilities of the Bryan public school system.

Bryan High School's 1965 graduating class numbered 206, out of a school enrollment of 778. The total public school enrollent in the city this year is 2,381.

South Side of First Block of West High Street in 1860
Horse is Standing on Platform in Sea of Mud



Carters Corner 1860

The Bryan Board of Education now owns the entire block on Beech St., having purchased the former Presbyterian Church property on High and Beech Sts.

* * *

The only recorded hanging in Bryan's history occured in 1849 when one Andrew Jackson Tyler was executed for the brutal extortion murder of a young boy.

Tyler professed to be a fortune teller, and had made his living in revealing the hiding places of farm animals and equipment that he and his confederate, Daniel Heckerthorn, a young man of limited mentality, had stolen, solving their own crimes for a fee.

In 1847, the five-year old son of a prosperous farmer living a few miles from West Jefferson disappeared from the farm yard. A search by several hundred farmers was fuitless, and Tyler was asked to use his supposedly clairvoyant powers to locate the child. He told the father that the boy was dead and would be found, "near green leaves, under wood and beside water." A few days later the boy's body was found inside a hallow tree near Leatherwood Creek.

Milton Plummer, Jefferson Township schoolmaster, suspected that Heckerthorn had a part in the crime and tricked him into making a confession, in which the youth admitted the murder, implicating Tyler.

Tyler was captured in Kunkle by a posse, and the two criminals were indicted for murder in the log court house in Bryan. They were kept in jail in Maumee City until the fall of 1848 because the Bryan jail was considered unsafe.

In the meantime, the county commissioners appropriated the money to build a board fence around the court house square, an action that the citizens challenged on the ground that it was designed to separate the people from their government. The commisioners replied that the fence was not designed to keep out the voters, but rather the voters domestic animals.

Tyler was tried for murder in the first degree, found guilty, and sentenced to hang at Bryan, Jan. 26, 1849. S. E. Blakeslee was the defense attorney in the trial, and J. Dobbs was county prosecutor, assisted by C. Case.

Heckerthorn was tried separately and found guilty of murder in the second degree, and was sentenced to life imprisonment in the penitentiary.

Tyler's sentence was carried out behind a new county jail on the north side of court square, near the present location of Sutter's Drug Store. Daniel Langle, Williams County sheriff, erected a scaffold, enclosed by a board fence. The fence was not to the liking of the townspeople and visitors who had come to town for the hanging, and they tore it down, as well as much of the fence around the court house and jail, for a huge bonfire the night before the hanging. With the fences gone, Tyler was hanged in public.

* * *

An 1864 map of Williams County, owned by John Mayer, lists many place names in the county which are now only memories. The population of the county was 16,538 shown by the 1860 census, and Bryan was 1,079.

Edon was shown as Weston on this map, and north of Edon about the present location of the turnpike, was New Berlin. Primrose and Hamer are on the map,

East Court Square in 1860
Pillars of Bryan's Court House Show on Right of Photo

East Side of Square in 1869 — North Half Burned in March 1875

but there is no Alvordton in Millcreek Township.

Lockport is shown as a fairly large settlement in Brady Township, but Kunkle is absent. Blakeslee is not shown, and Williams Center is known as Centre.

Montpelier and South Montpelier are shown as separate places.

The map of Bryan is easily recognized, with the street names in place for about three blocks each way from the square. The old rectangular court house is shown in the court park, and there is a fairground just east of Cherry St. at Maple.

There is but one railroad shown, the New York Central, with a switch and the wood house just across from the depot on the north side of the tracks.

Other points shown on the Bryan map are the Bryan Hotel, at the present Bryan Inn, the brewery at Wilson and Beech Sts., and a woolen mill at the west end of West Maple.

Center Street was known as Bryan Plank Road, and streets which have been vacated angled toward Pulaski and Evansport, starting approximately at Cherry Street.

* * *

The conflict betwen the Wets and Drys in this area was a continuing struggle, starting as long ago as the 1870's, and lasting until the days of national Prohibition.

The Good Templars, an organization of determined churchwomen, was founded in Pulaski in 1873, and their chief targets were the eleven saloons in Bryan. Their tactics were more passive than the Carry Nations of a later time, who broke up saloons with axes and hatchets. The local agitators probably provided Bryan with its first demonstrations and sit-ins.

The Good Templar ladies would gather outside the doors or a tavern in Bryan, kneel in prayer and sing hymns. Others brought their needlework and would sing and pray inside the saloons, commandeering the imbibers places in the bars. Apparently the men did not have the audacity to drink in the presence of their mothers, wives and sisters.

The crusading organization attracted some of the leading women of the area, and they waged war on alcohol for more than a generation. It was said that saloon keepers trembled when visited by them. Their crusade paved the way for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League, which were powerful forces in the years betwen 1890 and 1920 in the moral and political climate of the county.

The tavern owners, many of whom were Germans, tried various methods to discourage the ladies. The story is told about one saloon keeper who hired a four-piece German band to drown out the hymn-singing of the protesting women. The bizarre musical competition continued for some time, but finally one day the musicians were overcome with remorse or something, and they laid down their instruments and filed out, sobbing, to join the ladies on the walk.

That particular tavern owner was so intimidated by the Psalm-singing and praying women that whenever the crusaders appeared he closed his doors. He was once frightened into a day's loss of business by a group of school teachers who passed near his saloon, returning home from school and not at all concerned with his problems with the temperance agitators.

Carters Corner in 1870

A View of Bryan Looking Southwest From The Court House in 1908

Another tavern keeper, when invaded by a swarm of praying women, went out with a stein of beer in his hand and knelt with them.

At the turn of the century the W.C.T.U. and Anti-Saloon League had grown strong enough to control the county committees of the Republican Party, which was gaining in power in Northwestern Ohio. For a generation no man could be elected to local office without championing the prohibitionist cause, and local option elections drove practically all the saloons in the county out of business.

The Hon. Charles A. Bowersox, in his "Williams County, Ohio, History," published in 1920, wrote that since the national Prohibition law was passed, "John Barleycorn will never again be welcomed to Williams County."

The W.P.A. "History of Bryan and Williams County," published in 1941, observed that the granddaughters of the Good Templars and the W.C.T.U. perch at the bars where their ancestors once knelt at the walk.

* * *

Ted Connin, formerly of Bryan, now living in Washington, D. C., has a copy of the Buckeye Vidette, printed in Bryan on Sept. 22, 1881. This was published by J. W. Northrup, "Unawed by influence and unbribed by gain-Here shall the Press the People's Rights Maintain." It was one of quite a number of newspapers published in Bryan which did not last a great while.

The column rules are in heavy black because of the death of President James A. Garfield, and the paper expresses regret that the man who shot at Guiateau, the assassin of Garfield, missed his mark.

The Vidette gives space to the Greenback party, and reports the platform, demanding equal protection for labor and capital, , opposing all subsidies, government regulation of communications and transportation and favoring prohibition.

On the county ticket of the Greenback party were George Lautzenhiser, of St. Joseph for representative; John C. Hagaman, Bridgewater, probate judge; Jonathan Tressler, Jefferson, clerk of courts; Darwin Friend, Northwest, for treasurer; George Grindle, Brady, Sheriff; Benjamin Griffith, Superior, auditor; Benjamin Pickle, Florence, recorder; Henry Dorshimer, Jefferson commissioner; William Deuel, Springfield, infirmary director; and William Johnson, Superior, for prosecuting attorney.

D. A. Wolff, predecessor to Hawk's Clothing Store, advertised gent's clothing as did White and Hopkins, and W. J. Carroll, in the H. C. Long building, advertised groceries. W. J was the father of Duck Carroll, who is still in that business on East High St.

Howey and Ryan advertised novelties; Leidigh and Scott, Emery and Boothman, were attorneys—and at Evansport S. A. Justice was an attorney.

Mayor William Stough proclaimed a day of mourning for the late President Janes A. Garfield. The Vidette reports that word of the death of the President was received about 11 o'clock Monday evening, and that a cousin of the President, Charles Garfield, stopping at the Bryan House, was notified.

* * *

Several legends have developed and been forgotten during the history of Bryan and Williams County. One myth that has not died is the ghost of Beer Cellar

Looking North Down South Main Street in 1909

Another View of South Main Street in 1910

Hill. Like most tales, it was based on fact, but as the story has been told and retold, the facts have become obscured by fantasy.

Beer Cellar Hill, located approximately one mile west of the square on old U.S. 6, was so named because at one time there was dug into its side a huge cavern in which beer was stored and aged. Jacob Halm was the brewmaster who stored his product in the cellar of the hill.

Halm emigrated to the United States from Germany in 1854, and was employed in a large wholesale wine and liquor house in New York City. He settled permanently in Bryan in 1885, and bought a small brewery here from Henry Arnold.

The story goes that Halm's formula for brewing beer was a family tradition in Germany for generations. He took pride in the quality of his product, and according to Goodspeed's "History of Williams County" of 1882, The brewery of which Jacob Halm is proprietor is pronounced by those who are judges of lager to turn out as good a quality as is produced in any Ohio city, or in Milwaukee or Chicago.

In 1873 his business had prospered to the point where he erected a four-story brick structure at the corner of South Beech and Center Sts., which he equipped with the most modern machinery then available for the manufacture of beer. His home was next door to the brewery. He planted the large maple trees which lined the street in front of his home.

Shinns "History of Williams County," published in 1905, noted that the water used in the brewing was taken from an artesian well and sterilized before using, thereby assuring purity. The product of this brewery became at once quite popular, and the business rapidly increased from year to year, bringing deserved prosperity to Mr. Halm, and making him one of the most prominent and substantial businessmen of Bryan.

In 1883, while inspecting machinery in his brewery, Mr. Halm's sleeve was caught by a set screw on a revolving shaft. He was pulled into the machinery and was killed instantly.

Mr. Halm was a respected citizen and a kind, gentle man. He had the misfortune to be a brewmaster at a time when Prohibition was spreading through this area, and he was a favorite target for those espousing the Dry cause.

His son, Jacob C., who was educated in Bryan, assumed management of the brewery at his father's death. Although only 18 years old at the time, he had taken an interest in the family business since boyhood. He enlarged the plant's capacity to meet the demand for its product.

In the early 1900's local option elections in Williams County closed every saloon in the county as the Anti-Saloon League emerged victorious in the conflict between the forces of the Wets and the Drys. The Halm Brewery closed its doors, and the large brick building that housed the brewery was converted into apartments.

Then the legend came into being. People remembered the German brewmaster and his habit of testing his lager in the cellar of Beer Cellar Hill. If the contents of a keg of beer met his approval, Mr. Halm would say in his German accent, "In anodder year it will be goot, and in two years I vill sell it."

The cellar was abandoned when the brewery closed, and as years passed children playing on the hill reported that they could hear a ghostly voice coming

Bryan's Inter-Urban Station and News Stand in 1910

In 1910 This Was Bryan's Mineral Bath House
Located Where John Melton Motor Sales is Now

from the inside of the hill. Other boys playing in the rotting cellar claimed they had seen the ghost of the kindly brewmaster, walking through the cellar where he carefully watched the aging process of his quality beer. And so the legend of Beer Cellar Hill grew.

Now all that remains at Beer Cellar Hill that is visible is a grass covered slope. But the legend of the ghost of Beer Cellar Hill continues to pass from generation to generation.

* * *

Bryan, as the county seat and largest town of Williams County, has long served as the entertainment center for the area.

As long ago as 1886 the newspapers reported traveling shows appearing at the Music Hall. The Jones Opera House, later the Bryan Opera House, was built during that era. The Carroll-Ames Hardware Company occupies the original Opera House building at West High and Beech Sts.

The Opera House was the scene of a variety of performances, touring shows, vaudeville, lectures, local talent plays and concerts. It was used for many different occasions as time passed, basketball games, high school graduation before the auditorium was built in 1917, dances, roller skating, and later as a movie theatre.

Before the time of movies, plays were the chief theatrical entertainment, and the arrival of a road show in town was a major event. The company of players presented their repertoire in one-night stands, and brought a taste of the theatre to the villages.

The local citizenry enjoyed appearing in plays, and much time was devoted to rehearsals for the presentations of dramas and comedies, often for the benefit of some worthy cause.

Shortly after the turn of the century, moving pictures came to Bryan. The first pictures on a screen were shown as novelties between performances of vaudeville acts at the Opera House.

In 1907 Fred Culbertson installed a new machine in the Nickelette in the Neff building at the southeast corner of the square, and it was reported that the shows were well attended. Patrons were assured of seeing clear and steady pictures, many of which were beautifully colored. "Two big shows for five cents."

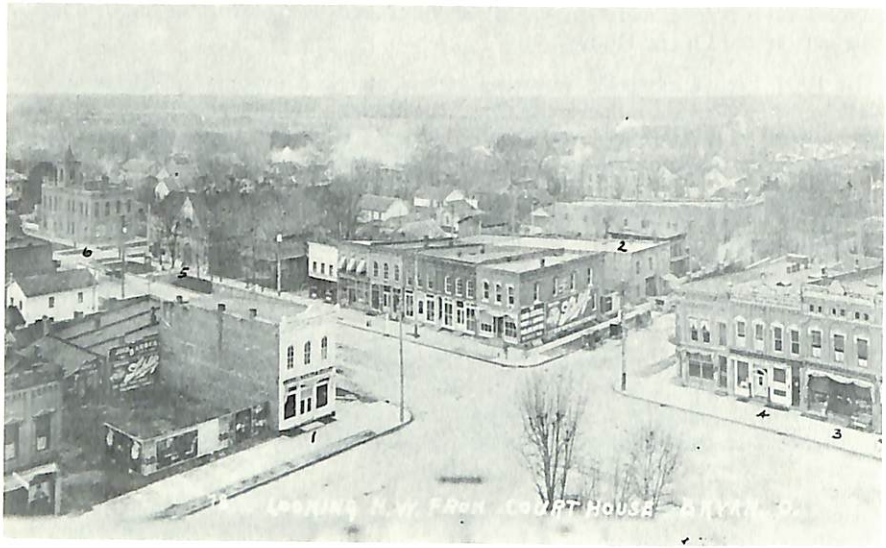
Barnett's Theatorium was advertising moving picture shows in 1908, and it was located on the north side of the square in the Keck building. James Garnett was owner, and C. C. Cotterman was operator.

At about the same time, Cotterman and Hugh McPhail operated the Airdrome during the summer months on the west side of the square. Young Charlie Cramer, a school boy interested in the theatre, explained the action as the early movies were shown. Cramer continued his interest in the drama and went on to become Richard Cramer, a member of Otis Skinner's touring company, a Broadway actor, and then Hollywood, where he made numerous silent and talking pictures.

By 1915 the North Side Theatre, managed by Bert Deardorff, and the Grand Theatre on the east side of the square were showing the latest silent movies.

Attending a moving picture show was a special occasion, and the audiences were enthralled by the stories they were witnessing. They wept over the plight of the heroine, cheered the hero, rode with the cowboys, quaked at the sight of

Looking East from 300 Block of W. High St. Showing City Hall and Jones Opera House



A View From Court House Looking Northwest Over Bryan in 1911

Indians, and lived every moment of the action. As words of dialogue or explanation were flashed on the screen, the audience was inclined to read them aloud, and a rumble of audible reading accompanied each caption.

When the film broke, as it did with annoying regularity, the impatient audience stamped their feet, clapped, emitted cat calls, whistles and boos until the harassed operator had repaired the damage.

Silent movies often were accompanied by piano music which set the mood for the action on the screen, and the William Tell Overture became a familiar musical selection for movie-goers.

Serials grew to be habit-forming among the children of the era, as they returned week after week to find out what danger had been overcome and what dastardly peril their heroine or hero would meet in the next episode. To miss a chapter of a favorite cliff-hanger amounted almost to tragedy.

Film stars of the pre-war and early post-war days included such stellar performers as Francis X. Bushman, the first matinee idol, the Barrymores, Alice Joyce, Theda Bara, Maurice Costello, Norma Talmadge, William Farnum, Charles Chaplin, Henry B. Walthall, Mary Pickford, 'America's Sweetheart,' Tim Moore, Bryant Washburn, Fritzi Scheff, Blanche Sweet and Dustin Farnum.

The newsreel was popular that long ago, and Hearst-Selig News and Pathe News were added attractions.

The slapstick comedies of Mack Sennett, Our Gang, Harold Lloyd, Laurel and Hardy and countless more, convulsed the audiences with their antics.

With the passage of the silent movie era and the transition to sound, production techniques improved, and the movies started coming to age. It is doubtful, however, that today's more sophisticated audiences can match the simple enjoyment and appreciation of movies that the early movie-goers shared.

* * *

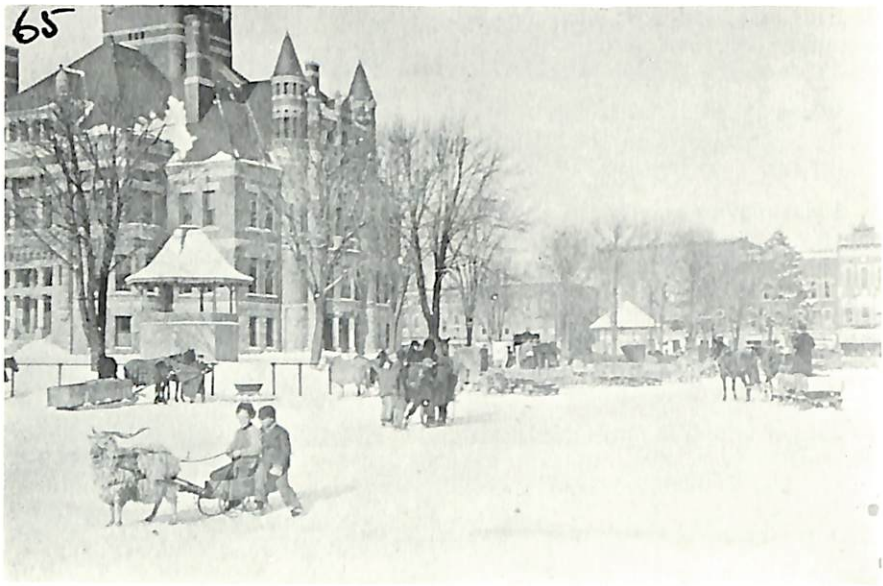
The early motion picture theatres, the Theatorium, Grand, East Side, North Side, and all those that flourished in Bryan during the silent film era, had disappeared by the early 1920's.

In 1921 the Temple Theatre opened in the old Opera House building, which had been converted for use as a movie theatre by Thompson and Boothman. The floor of the building was level, so the chairs had to be graduated in height, in order for patrons in all the rows to see the screen. The chairs at the rear of the theatre were almost the height of high chairs. Seating capacity of the show was 500. The opening night feature at the Temple was Douglas Fairbanks in "The Mark of Zorro."

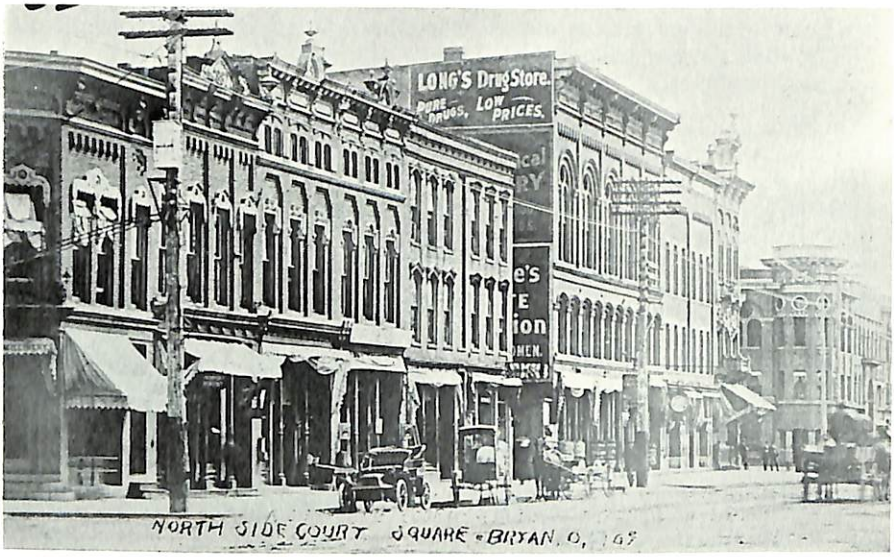
L. D. Miller was manager of the Temple in 1924 when a movement was underway to do away with the showing of movies on Sunday in the villages of the area. The ministers of the community took a firm stand against Sunday movies, and various pastors stood outside the Temple, taking down the names of their flock who were seen entering or leaving. The pressure apparently was effective, for the management yielded and closed the theatre on Sunday temporarily.

Mr. Miller continued as manager of the Temple until the Ellaness Theatres of Cleveland leased the building in 1935. Two years later Al Yahraus came to Bryan as manager of the show.

Sound came to the movie industry in the late 1920's, revolutionizing the



Winter Time in Bryan in 1909



North Side of Court House Square in 1911

production of films. Theatres installed sound equipment, and film stars' voices were heard. For some, it was the end of their acting careers, and for others, who had had stage experience, or who could speak lines effectively, it was the opening of a new world of stardom. Silent film stars who successfully made the transition to the talkies included Ethel, John and Lionel Barrymore, Gloria Swanson, Richard Barthelmess, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Bebe Daniels, Billie Dove, Norma Talmadge, Adolph Menjou, Charles Chaplin, and others.

The talkies brought about a change in the audiences, too, for they quieted down noticeably as they strained to hear every word of the dialogue. They reacted in much the same manner as they had to silent movies, but if they were too loud in their emotions, they missed the words of the actors. Also, the audiences no longer found it necessary to read aloud the captions that once were a part of all movies.

The depression years of the 1930's were hard on the movie industry, bringing about a decided drop in attendance. Theatres survived by introducing a variety of promotional schemes to keep their patrons. Bank night, Bingo, dish night, drawings for cash and prizes, and other attractions were added to the showing of movies.

Some of the popular actors and actresses of those years were Eddie Cantor, Will Rogers, Barbara Stanwyck, Wallace Beery, Janet Gaynor, Warner Baxter, Fredric March, Charles Laughton, Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Robert Montgomery, Greta Garbo, Gary Cooper, Jeanette McDonald, Nelson Eddy, and child stars Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, Deanna Durbin, Jackie Coogan, Jackie Cooper, Freddy Bartholomew, and Shirley Temple.

In 1940 the Bryan Theatre was constructed by Ellaness on the site of the former law office of Judge C. L. Newcomer on the west side of the square. Mr. Yahraus became manager of the new show, handling both the Temple and Bryan Theatres until the Temple closed its doors in the late 1940's.

The war years brought people flocking to the theatres as they sought escape from the day's realities into the world of make-believe. A galaxy of performers entertained them, including Raymond Massey, Henry Fonda, Robert Taylor, Joan Bennett, Gregory Peck, Peter Lorre, Paul Muni, Rosalind Russell, Greer Garson, Irene Dunne, Clark Gable, Merle Oberon, Ray Milland, Cornel Wilde, Fred MacMurray, Claudette Colbert, Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Walter Pidgeon, Ginger Rogers and Humphrey Bogart.

After the war the trend to outdoor movies developed throughout the country, and the Hub Drive-In Theatre was constructed in 1950 just outside the city limits on East High Street.

Serious competition as an entertainment medium began in the 1950's as television became a part of people's daily lives. The movie industry reeled under the blow, but stayed alive, and some of the top stars of those years were Tyrone Power, Susan Hayward, Kirk Douglas, James Stewart, Cary Grant, Glenn Ford, Jane Russell, Rock Hudson, Doris Day and many others who were also favorites during the 1940's.

Now in the middle 1960's, the movie industry is improving again, for people have become accustomed to television's challenge of home entertainment, and are once more seeking diversion at the movies showing at the local theatres.

* * *

Football was introduced at Bryan High School by Edward Gaudern, an attor-

The Northwest Corner of the Square at Bryan's Homecoming

Carnival Time in Bryan July 4, 1908

ney practicing in Bryan in the 1890's. His football background was unknown, but apparently he had had experience in the game, and he decided to try to produce a team at the high school to compete with other schools.

According to Dale Howey's recollections in 1938, Mr. Gaudern recruited players from the high school, and several ambitious boys turned out for what was then a very new sport. The boys who appeared were too large for the quarterback position, so Mr. Gaudern went to the eighth grade to find his quarterback.

He coached his raw team for the one game that was played that first year, on Thanksgiving Day of 1894. He did not know how the citizens of the community would receive his game of football, and did not expect a crowd of spectators.

The premiere game was played north of the New York Central tracks, and Bryan's team was composed of Dale Boothman, captain, Dale Howey, quarterback, John Riggs, Emery Neff, Clark Elder, Chris Bunting, Jim Newman, A. J. Bucklew and John Bucklew.

A good crowd turned out to see the action, and there was much enthusiasm around town. Bryan was victorious in the introductory game, defeating Farmer Center by a score of 14 to 0.

Football suits of that era were a far cry from today's elaborate and expensive equipment. The top part of the uniform was a leather jacket that laced tightly across the chest, and there was no headgear or face guards. The player's only protection was a nose guard. The pants of the football suit had staves in them.

The plays were straight plays, line bucks and end runs. The play most frequently called was the flying wedge, in which the ball was snapped to the quarterback, and his team went into a V-shaped formation, with the quarterback in the center as they ran down the field. The only defense against the flying wedge was to lie down in front of them, Mr. Howey recalled. The forward pass had not yet been introduced to football.

A touchdown counted five points, and the point after touchdown counted two. The place kick or drop kick also counted five points, and every team in those days had a good drop kicker.

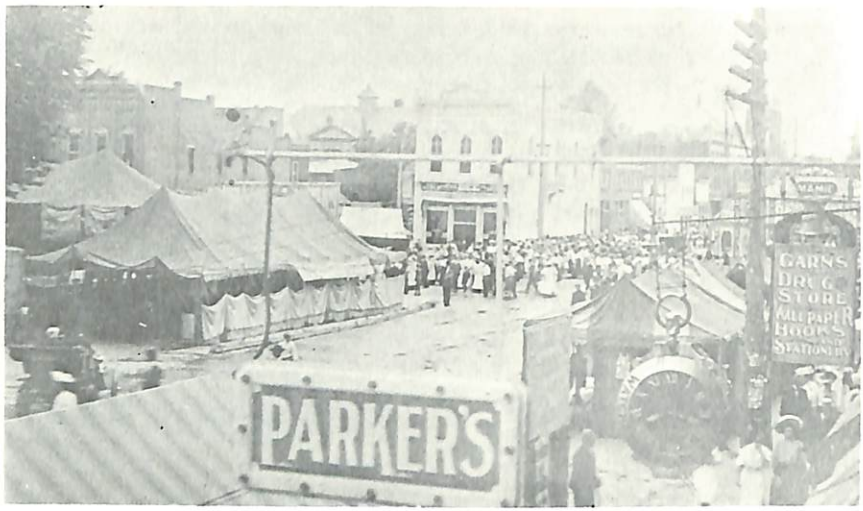
As the cold weather sport gained in popularity, various city teams were organized in Bryan from time to time, playing squads from many towns in the area. In 1914 Ralph Strayer was coach of the Bryan city team, and their practices were held in Garver Park. In October of that year the city team members appeared in their game with Montpelier in new uniforms, every man being "dressed alike." The newspaper pointed out the fact that it was the first time in the history of football in Bryan that a team started with whole new outfits.

The first football contest on record in northwestern Ohio was played at Defiance in 1796 between a team of Indian braves and a squad of Indian squaws. Judge J. Burnet of Cincinnati recorded the event, and it was in his honor that the exhibition game was held.

The judge was en route from Fort Wayne to Detroit and stopped in Defiance, then known as Ottawa Town, and the sport was arranged in his honor by the Deleware chief, Bukoneghelas. The squaws, after an hour of play, scored the only goal to win the struggle, leaving the braves red with embarrassment.

* * *

Bryan Civic Band boasts a longevity record that is unchallenged in the state



Carnival Time in Bryan July 4, 1908

Kerr Bros. is Now the Site of K & R Dry Cleaners
The House is Now the Site of Bryan Theatre

of Ohio, and it is doubtful whether many municipal musical organigations in the United States have been in existence longer. Its history dates back to 1852, when the first band here was organized. Members of Bryan's premiere band included John Connin, bugler, Charles Young, trombone, John Low, orphicleide, Sol Ury, bass drum, and Charles Arnold, flag bearer.

In its 114 year history, the city band has been known by many names, including the Bryan Band, the Fountain City Band, the Northwestern Silver Cornet Band, Tubbs Municipal Band, and the Bryan Civic Band. The musical organization's name was usually changed at the time of a change of directors, but each time the band was reorganized, members of the previous band continued to play in the new one, making a continuity of membership throughout its history. Until recently there was a member of the Connin family playing in the band from the time of its organization, and Ted Connin was the fourth generation Connin to play with the group.

During the Civil War several members of the Northwestern Silver Cornet Band were mustered into the 48th Regimental Band, but the local organization continued under the leadership of Henry Wertz, John Connin and Phil Gillman.

Before the bandstands were erected in court park, the Saturday night band concerts of an earlier era were played on a wagon that was hauled downtown and placed under the arc light at a different corner each Saturday night, McQuilkin's corner, Gleason's, McClain's and the Kentucky Liquor Store corners.

Prof. F. A. Tubbs became director of the band in 1892, serving in that capacity until his death in 1926. Under his leadership the musical aggregation increased to 40 members, and gained the reputation of being a fine concert band.

The Bryan band in 1898 and 1899 served as a Naval Reserve band, and attended the G.A.R. encampment in Cincinnati. In 1900 it was mustered in as the Sixth Regimental Band, Ohio National Guard, serving an enlistment of five years, and attended the funeral of President William McKinley at Canton in 1904. That year the band was reorganized, and became known as the Tubbs Municipal Band, the name it carried until it was once again reorganized in 1930, with the American Legion Band to become the Bryan Civic Band.

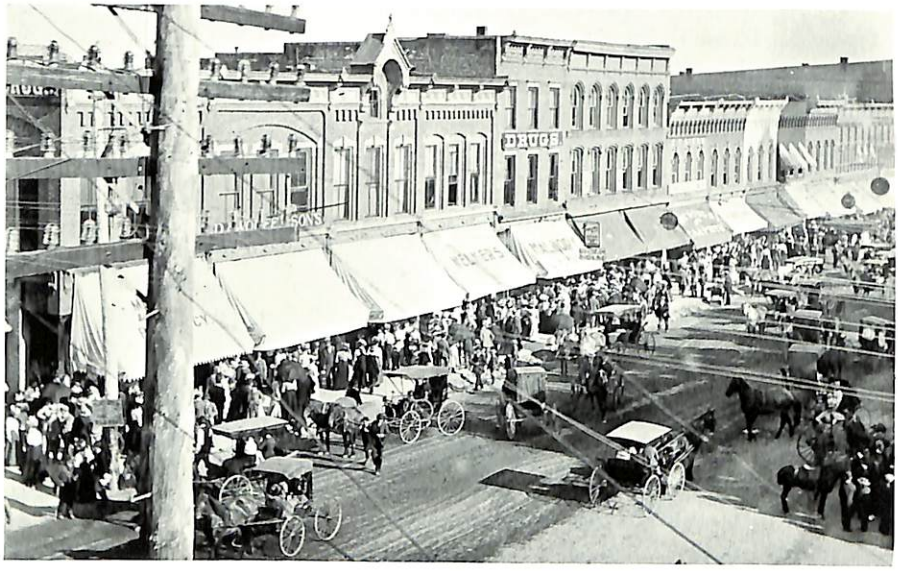
Dale Connin succeeded Prof. Tubbs as director in 1926, a post he held until his death in 1962. John Hartman, director of the Bryan High School Band, became bandmaster at the time, and is the present director. Membership in the band varies between forty and fifty musicians.

Bryan's band for many years was an important part of community life, participating in all major events. The band furnished music for every patriotic celebration, and it played for socials, lawn fetes, serenades, all kinds of parades, military encampments, county fairs, volunteer firemen's conventions, special auctions, political rallies, and all civic celebrations.

In its long history the Bryan Civic Band has played thousands of concerts, both indoor and outdoor, and has marched in hunders of parades, supplying music for all important events in the history of Bryan. The band welcomed distinguished visitors to town, and gave travelers on special journeys a rousing farewell. Parades were much more frequent in days gone by than nowadays, and no parade was complete without stirring band music. The band played at the railroad station when troops left during four wars, and it was part of the victory celebration when the wars were won.

The citizens of Bryan have loyally supported their band over the years, and

Looking South in 100 Block of North Main Street
Citizens National Bank is Shown on Corner



The 100 Block of South Main Street Years Ago

nearly 500 persons have been band members some time during their musical cereers, many for long periods of time. Dale Connin and Stanton Harding, for instance, held membership in the Bryan Band for approximately 65 years.

The coming of the phonograph, then radio, and now television and transistors, changed the need for the Bryan Civic Band to supply music for all occasions. Its activity is now limited to Wednesday night concerts during the summer, in the bandstand in the court house park, playing for those who enjoy hearing the strains of band music on a summer's night.

* * *

An unprecedented event occured in Bryan in 1895, when the village was not only host to a sumer encampment of a regiment of the Ohio National Guard, but entertained an Ohio governor who later became President.

The six hundred men of the 16th Regiment, O.N.G., arrived for their summer training on a special train of the Lake Shore Railroad on a Thursday of the last week in July. The soldiers marched from the train to their camp site, which they named Camp Grant. They quickly established their camp, and a city of white tents sprang to life.

The encampment was situated south of the present location of the Ely Wayside Furniture Store on what was known as the Morrow farm, according to J. R. Mick in 1952, who recalled visiting Bryan in 1895.

The townspeople went all out in welcoming the soldiers, and the village was decorated with patriotic colors, including residences and lawns. The sight of six hundred soldiers was a new one for the community and hundreds of men, women and children visited the camp. It was reported that they were most courteously treated by officers and men.

Governor and Mrs. William McKinley and their party arrived the following day on a special car of the Lake Shore from Toledo. Despite a pouring rain, several hundred persons met the train at the depot in Bryan and "fell over each other in their efforts to see the governor." So dense was the throng and so intense was their curiosity that the welcoming committee, which was composed of Bryan's most distinguished citizens experienced great difficulty in finding the governor's party and conducting them to the waiting carriages.

Governor and Mrs. McKinley stayed at the stately new Christman Hotel, which had been rushed to completion in anticipation of their visit. The dining room and reception rooms of the hotel had been beautifully decorated in honor of their distinguished guests, and the plants and cut flowers were from Wonsetler's Greenhouse.

The crowds that converged on Bryan for the week end were described as enormous, taxing the village's facilities to the limit, and a conservative estimate of 18,000 was made. Every inch of available space was jammed with carriages, buggies, wagons, horses and bicycles, and the downtown streets were so crowded that it was almost impossible to cross them.

The special occasion for such outpouring of people was, in addition to the encampment and the governor's visit, the reunion of old soldiers. More than 700 veterans of the Civil War and a few of the Mexican War registered at the reunion headquarters.

On Governor McKinley's first morning here he held an informal reception at the Christman, and was later serenaded by the Bryan City Band. The afternoon

Bryan Fire Department in Action Back in the Early 1900's

"Firemen, Firemen Save My House"

was devoted to a regiment, including Bryan's Company E, who paraded in full dress uniform, followed by a parade of the G.A.R. veterans. The ambulance drill on the parade ground was one of the outstanding features of the review, and it was reported that "John Mason was a skillful driver, the horses were willing, and the young fellows who wore a red cross on their left arm understood their business."

After the review ceremonies, the soldiers and veterans marched into the adjoining woods, where the governor made a speech which was described as timely and patriotic.

Governor McKinley's original plans called for his departure that evening, but according to the Bryan Press and the Bryan Democrat, "He was so royally entertained at the Christman that he and Mrs. McKinley chose to defer their departure until Monday."

All did not remain harmonious between the townspeople and the regiment, apparently, for the Bryan Democrat complained that the rowdies of the regiment were in town every night except Sunday, and "woke the echoes with their hooting and ribald songs."

After the encampment had disbanded on the following Tuesday, the Democrat commented, "It was a great occasion for the regiment, and a novel and interesting event for the people of the town and country, but it will be a long time before Bryan will make an effort to secure the encampment of another regiment in its vicinity. Once in a good long while is enough."

A year later, Governor McKinley received the Republican nomination for President and won the election. He was relected in 1900, and was assassinated in Buffalo in 1901.

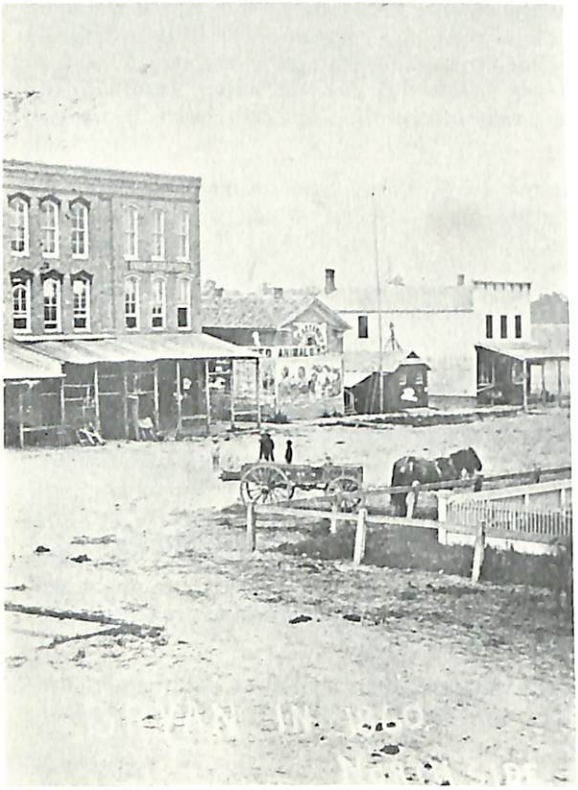
* * *

Bryan's Company E, Sixteenth Infantry Regiment, Ohio National Guard, had a long history of military service. The Bryan Times is indebted to B. J. Kemarly of Pioneer for information concerning the military record of Company E during the Spanish-American War. He lent "The Sixth Ohio Volunteer Infantry War Album, Historical Events, Reminiscences and Views of the Spanish-American War," which contains the war record and roster of the Sixteenth Infantry Regiment. The book was owned by his uncle, Ross Kennedy of Stryker, a member of Company E.

The Spanish-American War, although perhaps not the most glorious of our country's conflicts, was probably the most productive in territorial gains. Although the fighting lasted only four months, from April to August, 1898, the United States gained the Spanish possessions of Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam, and Cuba was granted independence from Spain. The war opened the door for America to become a world power, pointed up the need for a canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and paved the way for the development of a large and powerful fleet.

The Bryan Press of Thursday, April 28, 1898, edited by C. S. Roe, reported the activity in Bryan after war was declared by congress:

"Bryan was a scene of stirring events last weekend. It is only once in a lifetime that men see actual preparations for war, and this sight kept the people of Williams County in a continual excitement until the departure April 26 of Company E, Sixteenth Regiment.



3rd Building from Left is The Jail House on the North Side of Square. Built in 1844 by John McDowell at a Cost of $1,050.00.
Small Building Next to Jail is Bryan's Hook and Ladder or Fire Department in 1860.

A Photograph of Bryan's Fire Department in the Early 1900's

"Saturday afternoon the streets were crowded with people from every nook and corner of the county, eagerly discussing every scrap of news and watching the work of enlisting new men for the Company from this town. Young men from nearly every neighboring town came in, anxious to join the ranks, and very little fear could be seen among the boys eager to get to the front in our first foreign war within the memory of most men now living.

"The recruits averaged about 20 years of age, are in the best of condition, and will make good soldiers, should their work be needed. Volunteers were much too numerous, and it was impossible to use all who applied for admission to the ranks. The work of sifting began, and was continued until the number was reduced from more than 100 to 75.

"On Sunday afternoon West Unity, that place of historis patriotism, sent down their quota of volunteers, accompanied by the band and an escort of about 200 well-wishers. They marched to the Armory, where their band played martial airs to the waving of flags and the tumultuous cheers of the crowd.

"Monday evening the order came from the commanding officer for the Company to leave the next morning for Toledo, and at five o'clock Tuesday morning the ringing of the fire bell announced that the boys were getting ready for their departure. An hour later the streets were swarming with anxious friends, relatives, sweethearts, as well as hundreds of others whose blood is running high at the thought of war."

Shortly before train time the Company, escorted by the Bryan City Band, a large representation of Evans Post No. 149, G.A.R., and a crowd estimated at some three to four thousand, marched to the Lake Shore station, where Company E and their volunteers left for Toledo.

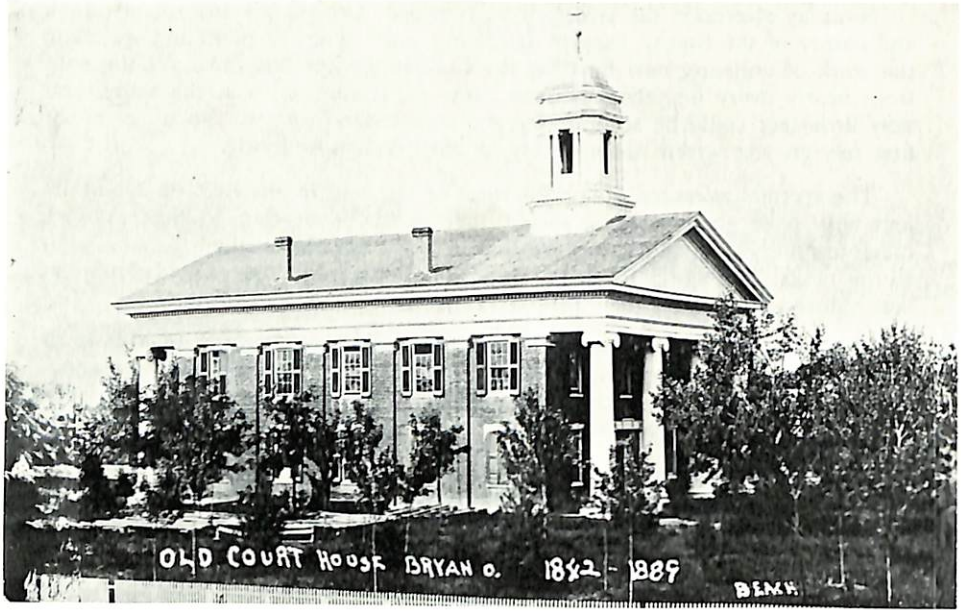
According to the War Album, Company E went from Toledo to Camp Bushnell at Columbus, where they were mustered into United States service. They left there the middle of May for Camp George H. Thomas, Chicamauga Park, Ga., where they trained until the end of August. The war ended Aug. 12, 1898. but Company E was kept in service until May, 1899.

On April 21. 1899, almost a year to the day that the Company had been called into service, they embarked on the U.S. Transport Sedgwick for Savannah, went through fumigation, and then were transferred to the Detention Camp on Daufuski Island. The Company was stationed at Augusta, Ga., for three weeks, and were mustered out of Army service there.

Several changes took place in the Company during the time it was on active duty. Four men died all from typhoid fever. Several transferred to the Regimental Band, including Clark T. Elder, Oscar W. Wyatt, John P. Fisher, and Andrew J. Bucklew. Earl C. Carroll was transfered to the U.S. Hospital Corps. Some received their discharges before the Company was mustered out of service, including First Lt. Samuel Diehl, Francis Wetmore, Charles Newman and Charles Boucher.

Capt. Charles Langel headed Company E, and other personnel listed included Sgts. Louis Fether, William Hummel, Wilson Connin, Charles Mavis and Henry Gabriel. Corporals at the time of mustering out were Charles Amsbaugh, James Newman, Willard Stoner, Frank Storer, John Saddoris, Daniel Warner and Ross Kennedy. The wagoner was Mark Leidigh, and Adolph Farber was listed as a musician.

Volunteers who joined the ranks of Company E during the first weekend of enlistment included many familiar area names, Bert Ames, John Engle, Charles



Second Williams County Court House — 1842 - 1889

Construction of the Present Williams County Court House
Corner Stone Laid April 30, 1889

Fox, Charles Gabriel, Harmon Kurtz, William Kelley, John Mason, Edward Moore, George Shankster, Arthur and Omar Spangler, Irvin Fay, Charles Lambert, Floyd Thomas and Charles Whitney.

Many other volunteers from Bryan and vicinity went to war later, but this Vignette has been concerned only with the first young men from this area to enlist.

* * *

In the early years of the development of Bryan, water was no problem for this fast growing community. Water was plentiful due to the subterranean supply from the Erie clay of the Maumee Valley. Springs were so numerous that they were a nuisance in some instances. In trying to dig for the foundation of a house it was not unheard of to hit several fountains. Until a few years ago vestige of these flowing fountains could be seen in Bryan, two of which were located at the corner of Union and Mulberry Streets. This is why Bryan was nicknamed "The Fountain City." Sam Folk was superintendent of the Bryan water plant for many years in the early 1900's.

The first of many artesian wells to appear in Bryan was in 1842, and required a depth of only 10 to 20 feet to get a good well. However, as more wells were drilled and the water level was lowered, the flow of water from these springs gradually disappeared. Before the days of modern refrigeration these springs were also invaluable to their owners as a means of preserving foods.

* * *

A new era in transportation began in Bryan in June, 1905, when the first electric car of the Toledo and Indiana Railway Company entered Bryan, making the 54-mile trip from Toledo in two hours without incident.

From Wauseon to Bryan, in every village and all through the countryside, the introductory car was met by throngs of people waving hats at the coming of the new electric car era. Several hundred enthusiastic citizens of Bryan gathered along East High St., to welcome the interurban car on its arrival. When the coach appeared about 12:30 on the afternoon of June 1, the happy, cheering, shouting and waving crowd followed the car up High St., to the depot, located at the present site of the Sears Order Office.

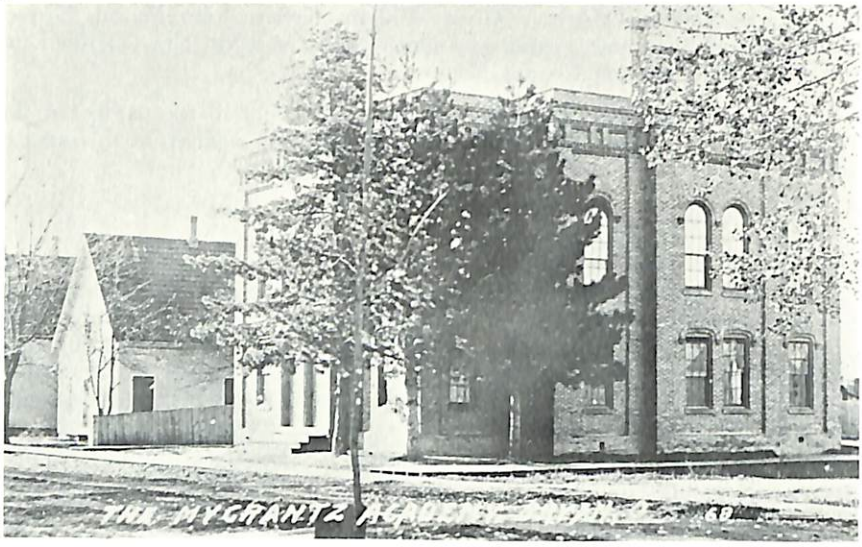
Officials of the company and other dignitaries were abroad the car and they were feted at a banquet at the Christman Hotel.

The cars provided the latest in accommodations for the traveler, and the handsome coaches were equipped with 75 h.p. motors and were gauged at a speed of 65 miles per hour.

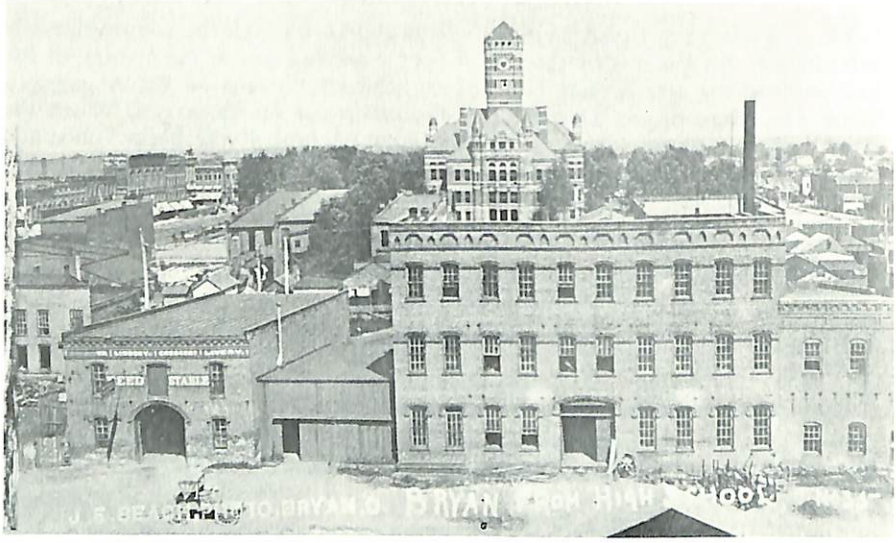
Gravel and stone were used for the roadbed and 70 pound rails made the runway for the cars. The power plant for the entire railway was located at Stryker, and the machinery was capable of supplying enough power for the 116 miles of roadbed.

The electric line provided a better schedule for the residents than the Lake Shore Railroad (now the New York Central) which covered the same route. Cars left Bryan at 5:45 a.m. daily and hourly trips were scheduled until 9:45 at night. The first round trip fare to Toledo from Bryan was $1.55.

The T & I became a popular mode of transportation and its excursions were



The Mykrantz Academy — 1868



Taken From the Old High School, Now the Junior High School This Photo Shows W. N. Lindsey Livery and Feed Stable and W. F. Forest, Veterinarian. Now the Site of Gorny-Winzeler Printing Plant and the Spangler Candy & Tobacco Company of Bryan

patronized by people of this area with great enthusiasm. Special cars were hired for out-of-town football games, basketball games, Tri-angular Literary contests, trips for special events in Toledo and towns along the route. Sunday School, church and lodge conventions, and almost any event attended in large numbers.

The first excursion on the T & I, during its second week of operation, brought crowds to Bryan from Wauseon and other villages along the line. They attended the annual lawn fete given by the St. Patrick's Church ladies, the most successful in their history to that time; some enjoyed the Seibel Bros. dog and pony show after the fete, and others went to the Methodist Episcopal Church where the social session of the Epworth League convention was in progress.

The electric line's heyday was before the automobile became common, and it filled a need for the smaller towns along its route for many years. Business on the road, both passenger and freight, was excellent and it prospered through the 1920's. But gradually competition from automobiles and trucks took its toll and passenger and freight revenue decreased. As time progressed, the cars became outmoded and rough-riding, swaying and bumping over the no longer smooth roadbed.

In 1939 the company decided to discontinue the line, one of the last in the state to go out of business, and on Oct. 15 of that year 35 veteran employes of the company boarded Car No. 100 in Toledo to make the last run. L. W. Venier of Stryker, oldest motorman in point of service, was the motorman for the final run. Employes from Bryan who made the farewell trip were Barney Gavin and Clyde Garver.

The tracks through Bryan were removed, the depot property was sold, and the physical evidence of the once influential electric line gradually disappeared. During the years of its operation it gave this area a much closer tie with its neighboring communities, and provided an easy, inexpensive way to reach other destinations, whatever the reason for the journey might have been.

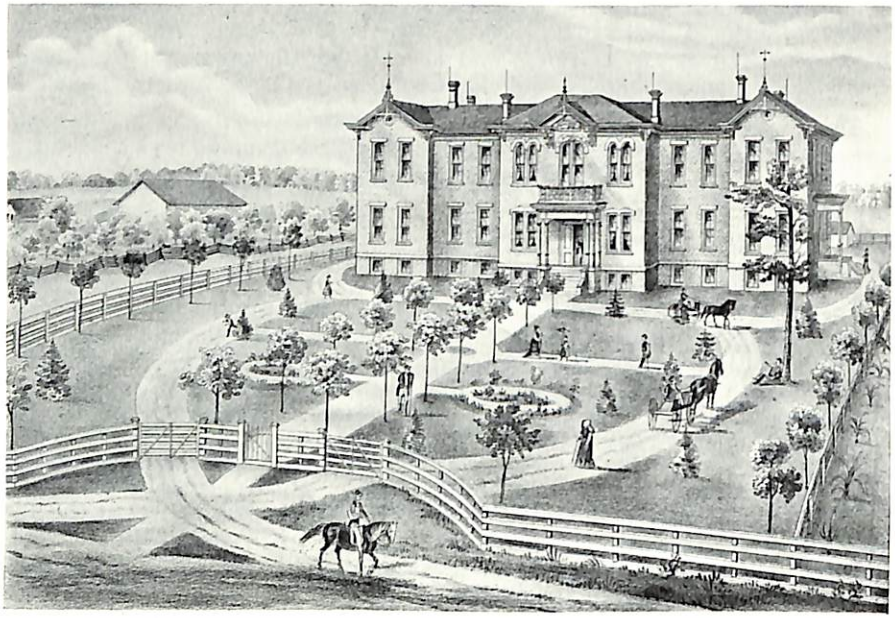
* * *

When Bryan observed the 75th year of its founding in 1915, life was much simpler, more easy-going, less hectic, and was lived at a slower pace. It was only two years before America's entry into World War I, and although fighting had already started in Europe, in 1915 Bryan was still relatively unaffected by the war. The Victorian way of life still flourished, and it was probably the last of "the good old days "before the war brought vast and lasting changes in the social, moral and economic fiber of American life.

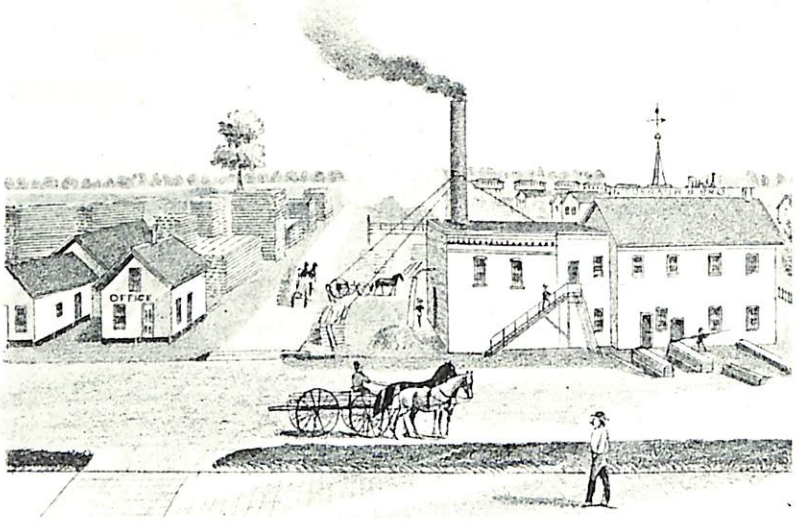
From the pages of the Bryan Democrat of 1915 is provided an abbreviated description of Bryan in the pre-war era.

"Bryan is 75 years old this year, and with an honorable record of 75 years of existence, Bryan today well sustains her long established reputation for solidity and the merited compliment of being a good town. Today Bryan has a population of 4,000.

"The village contains a number of handsome residences and public buildings, while the average homes evince the air of thrift and prosperity in their surroundings, in keeping with the industry of their occupants. The village contains fewer poor and squalid residences, indicative of poverty and misery, than most towns of its size. Bryan is represented in journalism by two papers, the Press and the Democrat. Several churches have been organized from time to time, and there are nine which are flourishing today.



Williams County Infirmary - Built 1873



Niederour and Bros. Manufacturers of Sash, Blinds, Doors, Mouldings, Flooring, Siding, Dressed Lumber, Lath, Shingles, etc. Factory Corner of Beech and Bryan Sts. — Approximately 1874

"The business interests are varied and extensive. The merchantile houses compare favorably in extent, variety and quality of goods with any town of equal size in the state. The volume of business is large when the close proximity of rival towns is considered. The merchantile houses are generally backed with resources commensurate to their demands, and the element of losses from bad accounts is reduced to the minimum by reasons of the stable character of the buyers."

A view of Bryan from the court house tower in 1915 disclosed that the city was a beautiful stretch of foilage from that height, with brown rivulets of road, asphalt pavement wandering off into the distance.

To the east of the tower the smoke stacks of the Van Camp Condensory rose against the sky and far to the east a Lake Shore train could be seen rolling eastward, "in its serpentine course, leaving behind to float over the fields clouds of fluffy white smoke."

The elevator on the Lake Shore tracks north of town, the miles of track and the curving roads flanked by green plats of sown acreage were clearly discernible.

Southward the view from the court house tower reached the countryside, where the approach of an automobile or wagon was telegraphed to the eyes of the observer by each successive blanket of dust that rose.

The city's clean alleys showed a strict observance of the village's sanitary regulations and ordinances.

Immediately below the tower around the square the busiest scenes of the day's activities could be seen. Business men were hurrying along, horses bobbed their heads as they pulled heavy drays, and the life of the community was viewed as a large panorama enacted below.

The writer who reported his impressions of the view from the court house tower termed it a pleasant experience, one which was worth the exertion of climbing the stairs, and one which anyone could enjoy.

* * *

For most of its 125 years, Bryan was known as a "Saturday night town," and to those who grew up in this community, Saturday nights in Bryan hold nostalgic memories. To a child, the treat of going to town on Saturday was a special one, and to adults, it was an opportunity to combine shopping, errands, entertainment and visiting with friends, relatives and neighbors. Everyone came to town on Saturday, and they congregated in the area of the public square.

Farm families made the trip to town on Saturday, and their wagons were bedded down with straw so that the children could ride in comfort. Farmers brought their grain in their wagons to be ground into flour or chopped feed at the Christman Milling Company of Russell's Feed Mill. The farmer's wife brought her eggs and butter to trade for staples at the grocery.

Before World War I, shopping was done at a good selection of stores. The Cronin and Boothman Company, Bryan Dry Goods Company, W. H. Moore Store, J, M. Welker Company, D. A. Wolff's, Neikirk's, and Kerr's "racket store" supplied everything from a spool of thread to house furnishings.

The Bryan Hardware Company's selection ranged from nails to Fords. At Culbertson's, Stekel's, Garns' or Hartman's drug stores could be found drugs, wallpaper, lending libraries and a host of products. Banking was done at the

Looking North on Lynn Street at World Touring Hupmobiles

The Jefferson House is Now the Hotel Elder

First National and Farmer's National Banks. Carroll's Grocery supplied the latest in foodstuffs, and R. A. Russell and Son specialized in ladies' and men's ready-to-wear.

After World War I, the shopping area changed, and some of the new stores were Uhlman's, Hawk's, L. S. Hall Dry Goods, Morris Five and Ten Cent Store, Howey's Grocery, Foust Brothers Furniture, and the jewelry stores of Schuck, Jacobs and Weber. Some of the jewelers also were optometrists.

Excitement was added to the day when teams of horses became frightened at the noise of trains and ran away, often dashing through the downtown streets.

No matter what era in Bryan's history, though, the main attraction was the Saturday night band concert. The downtown section was jammed with buggies, wagons, horses, automobiles and bicycles as people came for the concert. They hitched their horses to the green hitching rails around the court house park, in the alleys, and at hitching posts in front of residences near the square.

People lined the steps of the court house to listen to the band music, sat in their buggies or wagons, on the iron benches placed in front of stores.

As their parents listened to the concert, the children played games on the court house lawn and bought huge nickel ice cream cones at Essi's. Hot buttered popcorn and roasted peanuts were purchased at a brightly painted cart on wheels which was pulled to the east side of the square for the Saturday night rush.

Originally, the bandstands were located at the northeast and southeast corners and the band played in them on alternate Saturday nights. The merchants on the west side of the square complained, however, that the shoppers were congregating on the opposite side of the square for the concert, so later the southeast stand was torn down and replaced by a bandstand on the southwest corner.

For the young man courting his best girl, Saturday night in Bryan offered diverse entertainment. They could attend a Western movie, buy a soda at one of the drug stores, listen to the band concert, and walk. And walk they did, around and around the square, meeting all their friends on the tour. Four of five turns around the square was not unusual. When the concert ended promptly at nine o'clock, unless there were requests for encores, he walked his girl home.

As the Saturday night shoppers listened to the music that floated through the air on a warm summer night, chatted with friends, and noted who was walking by with whom, they often delayed their shopping until after the concert ended. Business was slack in the stores in the early evening, but once the entertainment was concluded, the people headed for the stores, keeping the clerks busy until eleven o'clock or later.

Their shopping finished, their chatting taken care of, and the entertainment enjoyed, the townspeople and their tired, sleepy children headed for home, and the farmers loaded their families into their wagons and began the exodus to the country.

* * *

Bryan's reaction to the declaration of war in 1917 differed from the jubilant response on the town in 1898. When World War I was declared nineteen years later, on April 4, 1917, there were no newspaper reports of great excitement, spontaneous parades, or an immediate rush to enlist.

Bryan High School Football Team — 1908

Bryan High School Baseball Team

Company E of Bryan, of the Ohio National Guard, which served as recruiting headquarters during the first days of the Spanish American War, were returning home from nine months of guard duty on the Mexican border when the United States entered World War I. They were immediately reassigned, while still on the train, to guard duty at Cleveland, and had only a fifteen-minute stopover at the station in Bryan while en route to Cleveland.

Five days after war was declared a parade and mass meeting were arranged by civic leaders, and described by the Bryan Democrat:

"Citizens of Bryan and vicinity at a great meeting, at which ringing patriotic addresses were made by half a dozen strong speakers, pledged unfaltering loyalty and active support to the government of the United States in the prosecution of the war against the imperial government of Germany.

"The mass meeting was held at the Opera House after one of the greatest patriotic demonstrations ever witnessed in Bryan, a monster parade in which more than a thousand marched, nearly everyone carrying an American flag. The parade was headed by the Tubbs Municipal Band, and the marchers included veterans of the Civil and Spanish American Wars, members of the Montpelier Rifle Club, Boy Scouts, militiamen, school children and citizens.

"The parade formed at the Christman Hotel, and after marching around court square, it stopped at the Opera House,which soon filled, and several hundred were turned away. The parade was impressive for the stern silence of the marchers, and the meeting at the Opera House was impressive for absolute unanimity of the cheering patriotic hundreds."

Among the first Bryan young men to enlist in the armed forces were Kenneth Grim, Sherman Frazier and Arthur Huffman, who joined the Signal Corps, expecting later to be transfered to the Aviation Corps, and Perry Borton, a high school student, who joined the Navy.

Ernest Beach was the first from Williams County to pass the examination for entrance to the training camp for Officers Reserve Corps that opened in May at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis. Others who were accepted early for officers training at Fort Benjamin Harrison were Forrest Culbertson, C. Arthur Hawk, Owen Kline, Warner Hamet, Glenmore Wagner, Jo Wonsetler, William Brannan and Russell Brannan.

Perin Long, a student at the University of Michigan, applied for enrollment in a volunteer ambulance corps, a corps made up of university students who bought their own motorized ambulances and other equipment.

Lieut. Charles E. Arnold, who had been on active duty with Company E since June, 1916, was ordered back to Bryan from Cleveland, to be in charge of a recruiting office here, two weeks after the war started. His assignment was to secure enlistments to bring Company E to war strength of 100 men.

Lieut. Arnold, for whom the Bryan Post of the American Legion was later named, was killed in action in September, 1918.

The necessary physical requirements for enlistment in the Army or Navy were: minimum height, 5 feet 4 inches; minimum weight, 128 pounds; age, 17 to 30; chest expansion, 33 inches; back straight, hips even, arched feet, must not be knock-kneed, and must be able to hear a watch tick eight inches away.

A federal draft law was passed by Congress several weeks after war started.

Early in May, Bryan followed Montpelier's lead and applied for an American

LOOK YE! READ! TAKE HEED!

GENERAL LEW WALLACE'S GREAT STORY

BEN HUR

Will be given in the Opera House
BY JOHN ANDERSON JAYNE

Friday Evening, March 21st, 1913

175—HAND PAINTED LIFE PICTURES—175
used to illustrate the story.

SEE AND HEAR THE GREAT CHARIOT RACE

Admission 25 Cents **Benefit of Christian Church**

One of the Old Window Posters Advertising a Coming Attraction to the Opera House

A Lithograph of the Interior of Grocery Store No. 3. Long's Block. J. O. Foot, Grocer & Dealer in Foreign & Domestic Fruits, Crockery, Glassware. Queensware, etc. Fine Tea & Coffee. Approximately 1874

Red Cross chapter, and charter officers were Miss Mildred Binns, chairman; Mrs. C. L. Newcomer, vice chairman; Miss Mildred Fulton, secretary; and Charles Wertz, treasurer.

Nineten months after the war began, it came to a victorious end for the Allies, and Bryan went wild with rejoicing. Because of a false armistice report a few days earlier, E. T. Binns, president of the Bryan Business Men's Association, arranged with a Toledo newspaper to inform him immediately upon receipt of news of the actual armistice being signed. He received the news at 2:00 a.m. on November 11, 1918, and he spread the word by telephone to all parts of the county. In Bryan the telephone operator notified those townspeople who had phones of the end of the war.

At six o'clock in the morning the court house bell rang and whistles blew, and within an hour flags, horns and noise-making devices appeared on the streets as if by magic; automobile horns tooted, shop and factory whistles were blown, bells rang, guns were shot off, and locomotives in town and passing through joined their whistles to the deafening din. For several hours there was general pandemonium.

The Bryan newspapers reported that, "Wildly enthusiastic in their patriotic ardor, nearly every person in Bryan and surrounding country gathered on court square to celebrate the end of the war. All morning and afternoon crowds marched and surged on the four sides of court square, celebrating the signing of the armistice. The whole town suspended its usual activities and turned out to give vent to pent-up patriotic enthusiasm. Schools closed for the day, and the banks, post office, and nearly every business remained closed."

Schools were dismissed as soon as they convened, and the pupils all marched to the court square and participated in the first parade of the day, at 9:30 a.m. A second parade formed in the afternoon, followed by speeches and music. In the evening the streets were crowded with a happy throng throwing confetti, and fireworks were shot off from the court house tower, making the night brilliant.

The Bryan Press reported that, "Monday was a day of genuine happiness, and the end, we all hope, of the greatest mental strain that has ever come upon the country."

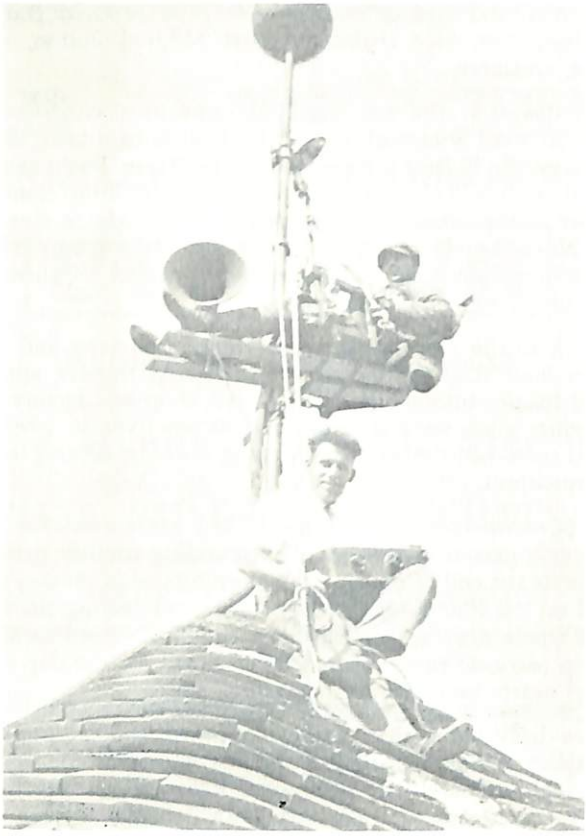
* * *

The July Fourth celebration of 1919 was planned as a memorable occasion, honoring the returned soldiers and sailors of World War I in the first peacetime observance of the holiday since the war.

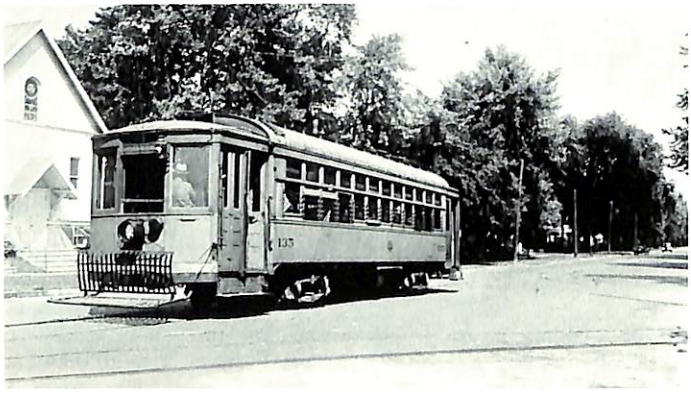
An all day program was scheduled, which included several band concerts, athletic contests, parades, speeches, a free dinner for the veterans, picture shows, glee club concerts, and dances. The grand finale of the day's events was to be a fireworks display in the evening.

The committee in charge of the patriotic celebration arranged for Charles Lichtey to set off fireworks from the top of the court house tower. He secured the services of William Kuhn Jr., Bert Brannan and Clyde Gonter to help in the pyrotechnical display, and Sheriff Yewis Perkins was on hand also. They piled the fireworks on the floor above the court house clock and on the ledges above the floor.

A large crowd, estimated at more than six thousand men, women and children had gathered in the court house park and around the square in anticipation of



Flag Pole Sitter, Charles "Minor" Leichty, Established a Record of 21 Days, 1 Hour 4 Minutes in 1927. Clarence "Dutch" Garber is Shown Equipping "Minor" With a Radio Set



Inter-Urban Train on E. High St. Church in Background is Site of the New Childrens' Library

the climax of a happy holiday.

Mr. Lichtey and his crew set off the first two sky rockets, which burst from the tower in a colorful arc, high above the onlookers below. Then suddenly the third rocket, a defective one, exploded in the tower. The premature explosion started a chain reaction, igniting the other fireworks, and the entire stockpile of more than 100 pieces detonated within a matter of minutes. The tower, 200 feet above the ground, resembled an erupting volcano.

The blasts shook the ground, the noise was deafening, and burning fireworks shot from the four sides of the tower simultaneously, falling upon the startled croud below. Pandemonium followed as the mass of people raced for safety, away from the falling sparks and bits of flaming material that were showering down upon them.

A few of the spectators received burned clothing, and others suffered a few bumps and bruises in their dash away from the cascading fireworks.

Surprisingly, the men in the court house tower fared well during the excitement, and of the five men who were in the middle of the conflagration, only two were injured slightly, one with a sprained ankle, and the other with minor burns.

* * *

Bryan became a part of the air mail service early in the history of the service. It was in May, 1918, that the United States air mail was founded, and Bryan was selected as one of the two spots in Ohio on the New York to Chicago air mail route.

A concrete block hangar was constructed on the new air field here, located on the Willett farm out North Main St., and the field extended east between Main Street and the Cincinnati Northern Railroad.

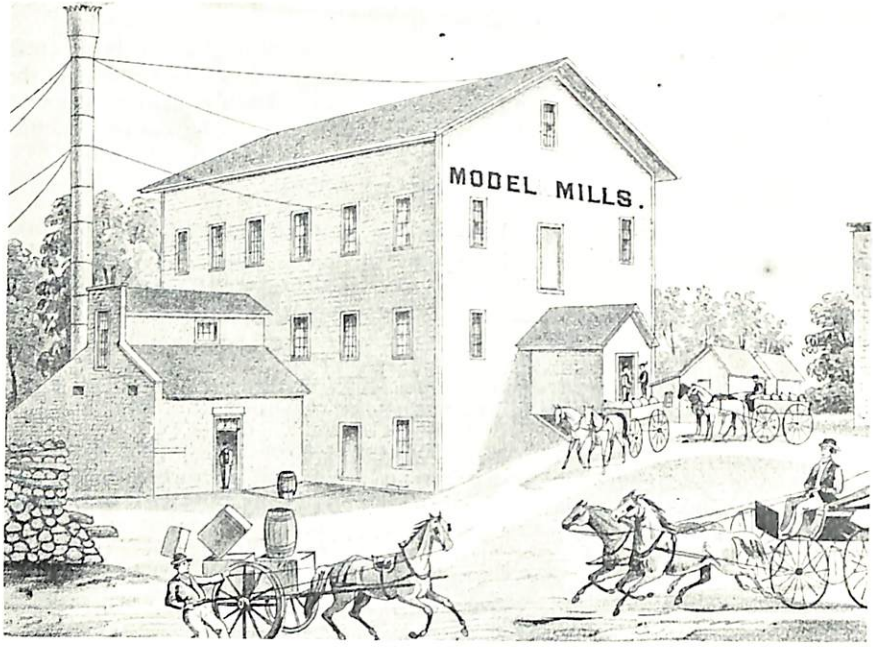
In Sepember of that year the first mail planes were scheduled to arrive in Bryan on the 5th. However, bad weather and engine trouble delayed the arrival until the following day. The appearance of the planes had been awaited by the townspeople since the scheduled arrival time, and when word was received the next afternoon by Postmaster E. C. Wisman that the planes were soon to land, the court house bell was rung, and hundreds of people rushed to the new landing field to greet the first air mail plane in this area.

The Bryan Democrat reported that "The first birdman made the trip from Cleveland in a Standard bi-plane in two hours and ten minutes, and delivered a small pouch of mail for the Bryan post office." He flew at a height of between 8,000 and 10,000 feet, and west of Toledo he followed the New York Central tracks to Bryan.

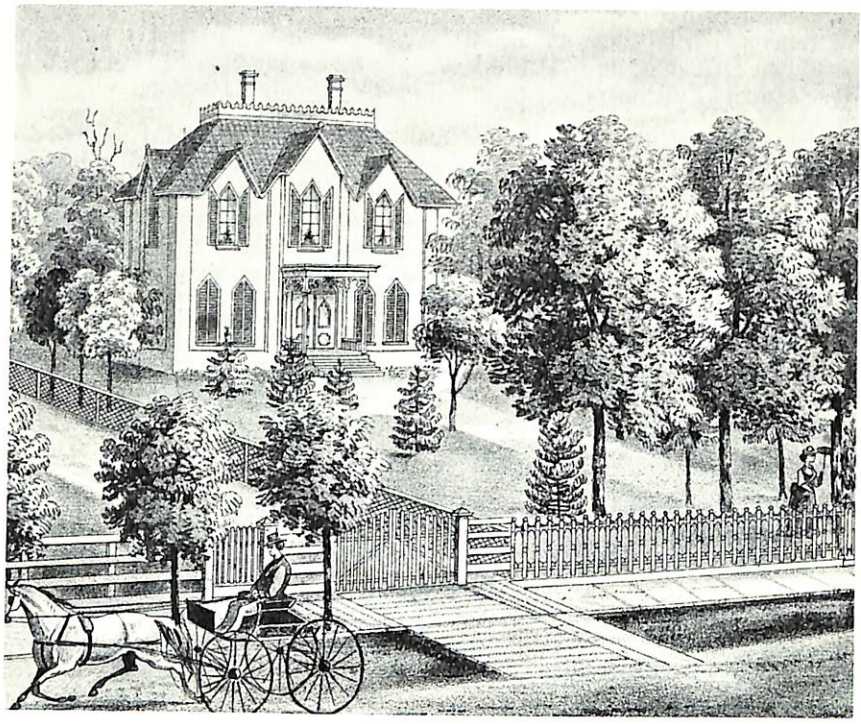
"The second flying machine arrived about 45 minutes after the first plane had departed. It was a Curtiss two-passenger bi-plane, equipped with a 16-cylinder Liberty motor. Its large motor made 130 miles an hour at times during the flight.

"Many Bryan people who waited to see the inauguration of the aerial mail route had a weary wait Thursday afternoon and evening, but they were satisfied Friday with the view they obtained of the two big airplanes, the first of the kind ever to land in this section of the state."

E. A. Johnson, a pioneer test pilot, is credited with sending the first air mail letter from Bryan in 1918, to his wife in Rhode Island. Johnson, at the request



Model Flouring Mills, N. A. Gilbert, Prop. Corner of Beech and Center Sts. Erected in 1866 by D. S. Cowhick, Bryan, Ohio



Residence of Hon. J. W. Nelson, Bryan, Ohio. Approximately 1874

of the Post Office Department, made the flight over the new air mail route to select emergency landing fields. Bad weather forced him down at Bryan, and he decided to go no farther west. He wrote his wife while here, mailing the letter in a Christman Hotel envelope. The letter reached Rhode Island a week later, and Johnson arrived home ahead of it.

During World War II Mr. Johnson became the Wright Field representative at Dayton for the Aro Equipment Corporation of Bryan.

An event of national interest occured in 1919, the first transcontinental reliabilty race, which brought more than 70 airplanes and scores of Army aviators to Bryan, the only landing place between Cleveland and Chicago.

For days the race filled the front pages of newspapers all over the country, and in Bryan schools closed on important days of the race, and hundreds of persons came from miles around to watch the flyers land and take off.

On Oct. 8, 1919, 57 planes headed west from New York City, and 17 started east from San Francisco. Bryan businessmen awarded prizes to the first pilot to arrive here, and about 30 came in the first four days.

All the pilots were Army aviators in the country's first big air race, and they flew Martin bombers. Nine Army men were sent here from Indianapolis to assist the regular force at the field, and after the race was over the air field and city received compliments from the government for the efficient manner in which the Bryan field cooperated.

Winner of the race was Lt. Belvin Maynard, a former Baptist minister, dubbed "The Flying Parson." He was one of four pilots to land in Bryan on the first day, covering the 650 miles from New York to Bryan in seven hours, and was the first to return to Bryan from San Francisco, nine days after leaving New York, becoming the first aviator to accomplish a trip cross country and return.

Lt. Maynard's record breaking flight from New York to San Francisco required 24 hours and 58 minutes of flying time, and he was en route four days.

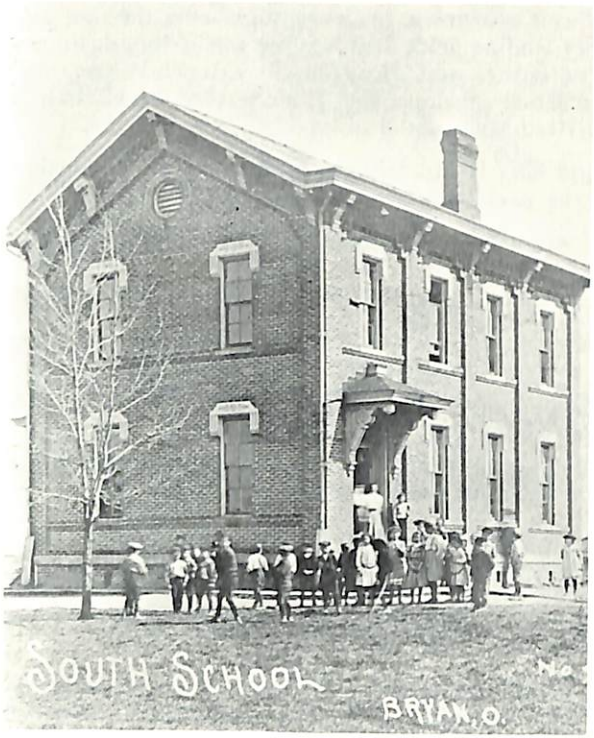
Four years later, in August, 1923, the first transcontinental air mail route, from New York to San Francisco, was opened. and Bryan's air field gained in importance. A wireless radio station for sending weather reports was added in a building near the old Dove Ice Cream plant.

Art Smith, an aviator well known to Bryan, was credited with flying the first ship on the initial transcontinental flight. He was employed by the Woodson Engineering Company of Bryan at one time as a test pilot, and in one test he cracked up his ship at the field here before hundreds of spectators. He was also credited with being the originator of sky writing in a plane. In 1926 he was killed seven miles from Bryan while trying to find his way here at midnight in a severe winter storm.

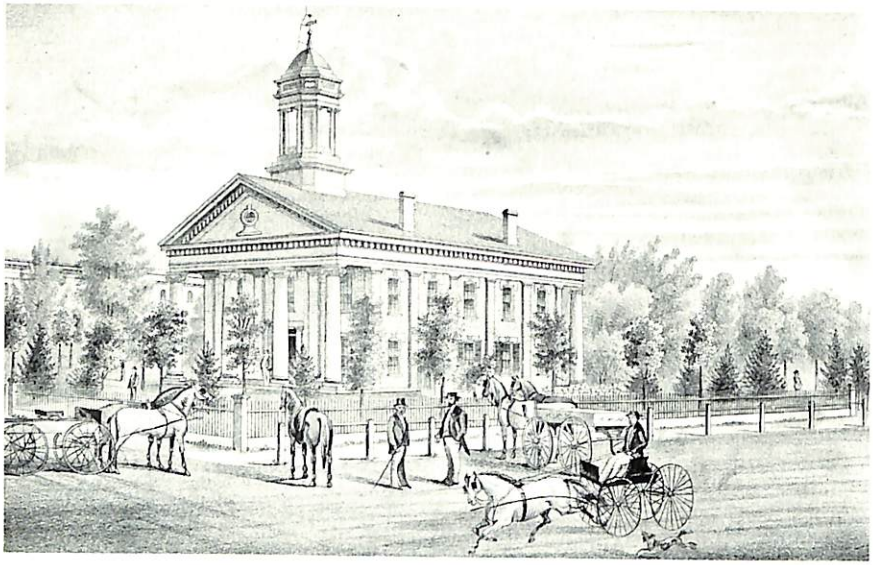
By 1925 the government had moved the airport to an L-shaped field a mile north, on the Price McCoy farm, and lights were installed at the field. This was the beginning of night flying for the air mail service. Before that time, the pilots flew only during the day, spending the nights in towns where there were fields.

The North Main Street field, after the government field was moved farther north, was used for commercial purposes, and the hangar housed the Woodson Engineering Company, an airplane manufacturer, for a few years.

As planes began to fly greater distances without refueling, the Bryan airport was used as an emergency landing field. In April of 1933 a cyclone demolished



Walnut Street School — Located on Corner of Cherry and Perry Streets



A Lithograph of Williams County Second Court House
Erected in 1842 - 1845

the hangar, wrecked two planes, and scattered debris across the field for a thousand feet. The storm marked the end of aviation in Bryan for a time.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, a small field two miles south on Union Street was in use. The Bryan-Defiance Airport was established during the war, 12 miles southeast of Bryan. Later the Stombaugh Airport was opened at the south edge of the city, and a municipal airfield two and one-half miles north of Bryan was operated by the city, beginning in 1947.

The new Williams County Airport is now in operation, located on the Richard Schreder farm, southeast of town on County Road D. There is a large hangar, a 3,000-foot hard surface air strip, a 1,300-foot taxi strip, and the field is lighted. The airport is capable of handling any twin-engine plane up to the DC-3 class.

The Newt Flint Flying Service has moved from the Bryan-Defiance field, and supplies all phases of single engine flight service, instruction, and charter service.

* * *

In 1923 the Bryan Democrat published a special automobile edition. Several factors were quoted in the edition as being responsible for making Bryan an automobile center: good hard roads leading every direction; excellent accommodations which the local hotels and restaurants afforded tourists; and free camping site; and the erection of metal signs on the highways directing travelers to Bryan. It was stated that from May until October there was never a night when the hotels were not filled; the garages packed, and the restaurants kept busy.

Cars that were popular that year, and which had agencies in Bryan, included the Paige, Jewett, Chevrolet, Willys Knight, Willys Overland, Studebaker, Maxwell, Nash, Packard, Hupmobile, Ford, Buick, Chalmers and Gray.

More automobiles were stolen in the United States during 1922 than all the cars registered in most of the nations of Europe, according to Firestone Tire Company statisticans, who valued this huge number of pilferings at about one hundred million dollars.

The first automobile accident on record occured in 1896 when a motorist collided with a laundry wagon.

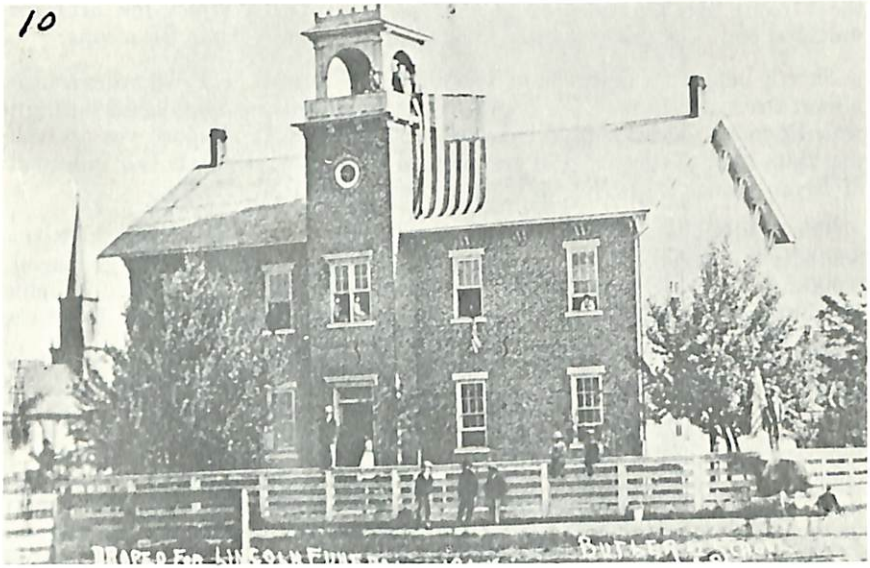
Garages in 1923 catering to the needs of the motoring public included the Christman, L. D. Keyes, the Main Garage, Bishop's, Bryan Auto Paint Co., the Jefferson Garage, Huffman Motor Service, Main Vulcanizing Shop and the Bryan Tire and Hydraulic Press Service.

Motorists were advised that when the automobile is placed in the garage for the winter, it is recommended that the car be raised from the floor to take the weight off the tires.

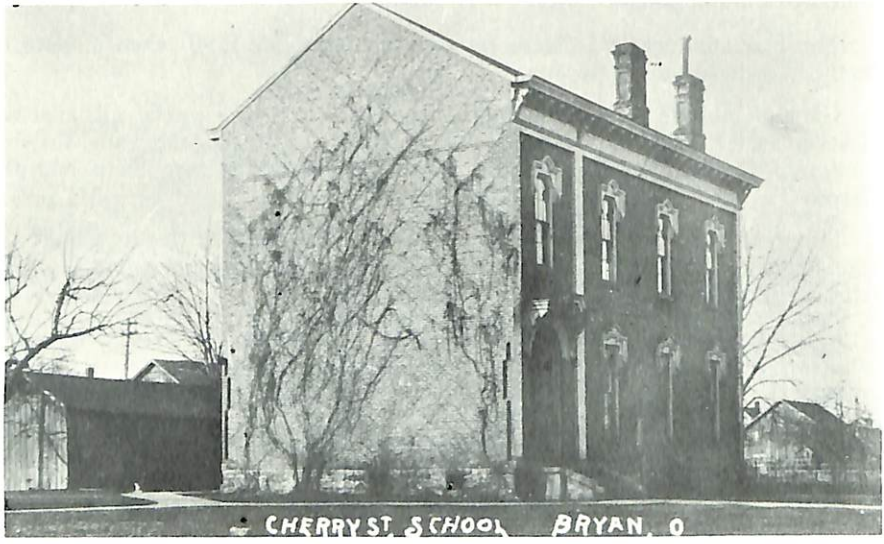
Many laws were passed in the previous sessions of the State Legislature affecting motorists. Bills provided uniform traffic regulations, protection to the motorists against receiving short measure at gasoline stations, limitations on the authority of local officials who were inclined to operate speed traps for profit, and the requirement that drivers of school vehicles stop, look and listen at all railroad crossings.

It was felt that the greatest accomplishment of the legislative sessions for the motorist was the defeat of a two-cent a gallon tax on gasoline.

Car models which were advertised were the coach, sedan, roadster, touring coupe, the sport touring, coupe-sedan, coupe-roadster and the speedster. Prices



Butler Street School, Built 1858 - 1903, Draped for Lincoln's Funeral
Junior High School Now Located on this Site.



Cherry Street School, Located on East Mulberry Street

ranged on the four and six-cylinder cars from $525 for the Overland touring car to $2,750 for the Studebaker Big-Six sedan.

The Ford Motor Company was promoting a Ford Weekly Purchase Plan, in which $5 enrolled the buyer, who then paid for his car weekly, as much as or as little as he felt he could afford. The Bryan banks served as depositories for the accounts, which drew interest, and the buyer was assured that in a short time the deposits and interest would be sufficient to obtain delivery of the car.

The ad did not specify whether delivery of the automobile was received when the full purchase price had been accumulated, or whether the purchase plan was a means of saving enough for the down payment.

* * *

The year 1927 was memorable for some events that were of lasting importance, and others that brought fleeting fame to the participant. On the national scene, Charles A. Lindberg flew across the Atlantic Ocean alone, from New York to Paris, and motion pistures with sound began in Hollywood.

On the local scene, the first issue of the Bryan High School newspaper, Hi-Life, was printed; the village adopted Eastern Standard time after a state law made it uniform throughout the state; Orchard Hills Country Club formally opened; Henry Krill and Son Mortuary moved into the former Bowersox residence at the corner of East High and Cherry Streets; Harry Klender leased his big building at the corner of West Butler and Beech Streets to the Ames-Lindsey Auto Exchange; and the Boys Drum and Bugle Corps was organized.

On the local political scene Bryan was in sad financial plight; and the village officials had gone unpaid the entire year. The businessmen of Bryan, after a rash of downtown robberies, hired a night patrolman for protection. Bootleggers and car thieves kept law enforcement officials of the area busy. The mayoralty election ended in an extremely close verdict, a recount was demanded, and the loser became the winner. A levy was passed in November that eased the city's financial situation.

And in 1927 Bryan was in the national spotlight for a few weeks because a the exploit of a flagpole sitter. Charles "Minor" Leichty of Toledo, a former Bryan resident, conceived the idea of trying to better the flagpole sitting record, and chose his old home town for the feat. Flagpole sitting was one of the many publicity stunts that were common in the 1920's.

When Leichty decided to try for the record, it was held by Shipwreck Kelly, who had sat atop a flagpole on a hotel in New Jersey for sixteen days, and Leichty vowed to sit for twenty-one days.

There was some controversy about allowing Leichty to try the stunt, but he received permission from the County Commissioners to go aloft and stay. He chose a time when Bryan was presenting a gala Band and Park Festival, and the committee sponsoring the Festival paid him $15 per day for the first ten days of his performance. The remainder of the time he was unemployed.

Mr. Leichty was no stranger to dizzying heights, for he had worked on skyscrapers, telephone poles and circus high-diving platforms. He was acquainted with the particular flagpole he had chosen, above the court house tower in Bryan, as he had helped install the pole, and he had also painted the hands on the court house clock. One time he slid down a 1,400-foot cable from the court house flagpole to the ground below.

An arm chair fitted with a foot rest, adjustable back, arm rests and cushions was hauled about half way up the flagpole, and there he began his reclining on August 20. Safety straps secured him in the chair when he slept. Food and drink were hoisted to him by his son Ralph, who set up living quarters in the court house tower, where he was readily available to supply his father's needs.

Mr. Leichty was dressed in wool for protection from the sun and rain, and he had a heavy coat for cooler weather. He found the nights were quiet cool at that height.

The Red Man Tobacco Company kept him supplied with tobacco, and the Spangler Candy Company furnished him with the nourishment of candy. At various times during the Festival days he released balloons from his eagle's nest, redeemable when found for boxes of Spangler candies at Carroll's Grocery.

"Dutch" Garber of the Culbertson Electric Shop equipped his perch with an Atwater-Kent radio set so he could keep abreast of the news and have music to help pass the hours. A telephone was rigged up in his chair, and he kept in touch with friends, relatives and newspaper reporters.

A searchlight was installed in the court house park to cast a strong beam on the sitter at night, so that the evening visitors could get a good view of him. The curious came from all over the tri-states, and many tourists from distant states, hearing of the feat in Bryan, came through town to get a glimpse of the man who was roosting high above the town for days on end. During the three weeks he was aloft thousands of persons came to Bryan to crane their necks for a look at him.

Oscar Krill set up a large telescope which was focused on Leichty, and onlookers were permitted to get a close-up of him for five cents per squint.

The accompanying publicity that Bryan and its record-seeker received became nationwide in scope as the days passed and as he continued his vigil. The Toledo Blade reported that, "Surrounded only by eagles, gnats and mosquitoes, our hero sat and sat and sat."

The sight of Leichty suspended in mid-air day after day moved Cass Cullis, editor of the Bryan Democrat, to compose a four-stanza poem, the first verse of which went like this:

"Once upon a court house steeple, just to entertain the people,
Sat a sitter, simply sitting, sitting while the time was flitting,
Neither knitting, nor yet quitting, sitting simply, simply sitting
Where none ever sat before, far above the court house door,
While the crowds filled up the square, crowds galore, that gathered there
Just to stand around and stare at the man up in the air,
Sitting simply, simply sitting.

At the same time that Mr. Leichty diligently sat, competitors were trying the same stunt in several parts of the counry, including a female flagpole sitter in Los Angeles.

True to his word, Leichty stayed on his perch the full twenty-one days, descending on September 10. The court house park was filled with spectators who came to view his descent. He came down a world-champion flagpole sitter, brown as a nut, somewhat nervous, and a little wobbly on his feet, but in fairly good shape.

As is the case in most championships, a champion can never feel secure in his glory, and it was only a matter of a very short time before some other dare-

devil had surpassed Leichty's record of twenty-one days. For a time, though, his feat brought thousands of visitors to Bryan and put the town in the national spotlight, even though it was only for the sport of sitting.

* * *

Bryan's most memorable civic celebration was the week-long observance of its 100th birthday in August, 1940. Months of planning, much hard work, many decisions, rehearsals and hundreds of meetings culminated in an all-out community effort that made Bryan's Centennial an unforgettable event, variously described as 'most historic week', 'greatest celebration in its history', and 'a humdinger.'

Approximately 1,600 invitations were mailed to former residents by the invitation committee, inviting them to share in the historic anniversary and homecoming. Hundreds of persons responded, coming from eighteen states, scattered from Massachusetts to California, and registered during the celebration.

For months before the event, more than 200 Bryan men went unshaven, producing in August a remarkable crop of beards of every description. The "Whiskerinos", as they were called, gained widespread publicity for the Centennial when they formed a huge caravan of 600 people, 230 of whom were bearded, and went to Toledo to attend a Mud Hens baseball game, escorted by the State Highway Patrol.

Upon their arrival at Swayne Field in Toledo, the Whiskerinos, led by the Bryan Civic Band, marched in at left field, straight to first base, and then to home plate, where a beard judging contest was held. Harold Perkins was named the possessor of the finest beard. Toledo Mayor Carey welcomed the Bryan delegation, and Mayor Ames of Bryan responded. After the game the bearded Bryanites were treated to dinner at Bud and Luke's Restaurant.

Grant Brown served as general chairman of the Centennial preparations, coordinating the activities of the following committee chairmen: invitations, Ralph Strayer; registration, Mrs. Sylvia Ames; Sunday events, Elmer O. Smeltz; receptions, Mrs. Philip Niederaur; Saddle Show, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Taylor; pet parade, Mr. and Mrs. George H. Smith; melodrama, Mrs. H. R. Mayberry; decorations, Nenry Nofziger; band activities, Dale Connin; parades, Phil Niederaur; publicity, Walter Gardner; tableau floats, Mrs. H. R. Mayberry; finance, Homer Martin; costume ball, Mrs. Della Casebere; and antiques, Ed A. Bowen.

The week's festivities started with a reunion of members of the Bryan Band at its Saturday night concert in the court house park. Sunday the churches of the city held special services and reunions with former members of their congregations, and in the evening a community church service was planned in Park Stadium, where a massed choir of almost two hundred voices sang.

The presentation of a melodramatic melodrama, "He Ain't Done Right By Our Nell", was scheduled for Monday night, bringing the finest local talent in stellar performances Several humorous acts and skits preceded the melodrama, presented by other Bryan performers.

The Centennial Reception was a feature of Tuesday night at the high school gymnasium and auditorium. Congressman Cliff Clevenger presented to the City of Bryan a flag which had flown over the Capital Building in Washington, and during the rest of Centennial week it was on the flagpole atop the court house.

A crowd of more than 1,300 attended the third annual Saddle Show at Park Field Wednesday night, where some of the finest horses of the area were put through their paces.

The gala Centennial Costume Ball was the highlight of Thursday night, and approximately six hundred persons attended the ball in the gymnasium, four hundred appearing in costumes of different periods in Bryan's history. Music for dancing was furnished by Frederick Seymour's Orchestra of Toledo, and square dancing tunes were played by Carmon Casebere, fiddler, Muir Mathews, pianist, and Ray Ricketts, caller.

Several prizes were awarded at the ball, including one to Ray Rosendaul for his exceedingly thick and handsome beard, and another to Mrs. Rosendaul for the fortitude and civic spirit she displayed while her husband grew his beard.

Bryan's annual Horse Show was an important part of the Centennial celebration, and its events were scheduled Friday and Saturday. More than one hundred fine Belgian draft horses were judged during the Horse Show.

The highlight of the week-long commemoration was the combined Horse Show and Centennial Parade, presented Friday and Saturday, and watched and enjoyed by crowds estimated at 15,000. Historic events were depicted by many persons in costumes who rode on floats in the parades, including those representing the Perkins family arriving at Pulaski in 1832; surveying of Bryan; a Mexican War color guard; the first church; the first post office; the first wedding; Andrew Tressler teaching the first school; the American Legion as a Civil War color guard; the first telephone; the first court session; and the old fire ladder wagon. Descendents of some of the original settlers rode on floats.

Other features of the celebration included massed band concerts, a pet parade, ball games, and dancing nightly at the Armory.

Antiques of all kinds were displayed in stores, offices, shops, banks and automobile showrooms. The Ames Garage was headquarters for a special colcowbell, and a bed in which Johnny Appleseed was reported to have slept.

Two miniature reproductions were of interest. One was a reproduction of the Bryan public square as it appeared in Civil War days, painstakingly made by Jake Cutler. The other was a miniature circus, complete with performers, musicians and animals, and shown for the first time during the Centennial by Frank Lane.

It was estimated that well over 50,000 visitors came to Bryan during its historic week, taking part in the scheduled activities and joining in fun of the city's hundredth birthday party.

* * *

Sunday, December 7, 1941, began as any other Sunday in the lives of Americans, and ended as a day that changed the history of the world. In Bryan it was a sunny, chilly, pleasant day. The townspeople went about their usual Sunday routine, going to Sunday School and church in the morning, followed by their Sunday dinner.

Times were good in Bryan. The Depression of the 1930's was becoming a memory. Employment was high, and the Aro Equipment Corporation reported a backlog of orders totaling $3,000,000, with negotiations in progress for an additional million dollars worth of orders. The Schuck Jewelry Store was celebrating its 25th anniversary, and the basketball team had just opened with a walloping defeat of Kunkle by the Bryan Bears. Bread was selling for ten cents a loaf, and milk was twelve cents a quart. Sirloin steak was 35 cents per pound.

The business section of Bryan was decorated for Christmas, and the stores were abundantly stocked for the anticipated Christmas buying rush. Santa Claus was scheduled to arrive in downtown Bryan in about ten days.

A trapshoot was scheduled Sunday at the Bryan Gun Club, and first prizes were choice lots of pecans. Wiliam Powell and Myrna Loy were appearing in "Shadow of the Thin Man" at the Temple Theatre.

Several Bryan Hi-Y members, Robert Zwayer, John Carlsten, Rudy Walters. Max Poer and Charles Connin, accompanied by their adviser, S. A. Wagner, were attending the state conference of the organization at Springfield.

A few students were home from college for the weekend, Tony Mignry and Fred Foust from Ann Arbor, and Bill McKarns from Lansing. There were a number of servicemen home on leave that Sunday, and others had already received their discharges, having reached the maximum draft age of 28.

The national Selective Service Act had been in effect for more than a year, and many young men of Bryan were away at training camps, on ships, or assigned to bases in the United States and overseas. Bryan by this time was more or less taking the draft for granted.

The chief activity in town Sunday was the district conference of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a few hundred uniformed veterans were on the streets before going to the meeting at the auditorium.

Bryan citizens followed with interest the war in Europe, which had been in progress for more than two years. Their sympathies were with the people of England, but there was still a strong isolationist sentiment throughout the Middle West. It is doubtful whether many Bryanites were very much interested in the visit to Washington of a Japanese special envoy.

After dinner on Sunday families followed their normal routine for a Sunday afternoon in the winter. Some visited friends or relatives, or had guests; others napped; a few read the new Chicago paper, "The Sun", which had appeared on newstands the preceding week; and others listened to their radios, at home or in their cars. Those who had their radios turned on in the middle of the afternoon were stunned into shocked disbelief when the scheduled program was interrupted by the announcement that Japanese planes had bombed Pearl Harbor, our huge naval base in Hawaii. The announcer told, in a voice hard to control, about the devastation that was being wrought to our fleet at Pearl Harbor and to the nearby Army Air Force Base at Hickam Field

Instantly the war was brought home to Bryan families, and their immediate concern was for the safety of sons, brothers, relatives and friends who were known to be serving in the Pacific. Seven Bryan youths were in the Hawaiian area that day, including Norman Carroll, Arnold Mignery, Gerald Rosendaul, Earl Clark, Clyde Ridenour, Jr., Max Wheeler and Clifton Grim.

The radio listeners quickly spread the news by telephone, and the townspeople spent the remainder of the day and evening by their radio sets. Attendance at Sunday night church services and the movie dropped considerably as the anxious populace stayed by their radios to get every possible scrap of news. Rumors had already started, that Japanese submarines were sighted near the Panama Canal, and that Japanese planes were near the California coast.

The stunned reaction to the numbing news turned to anger, as Paul Van Gundy noted in his "Cud Colyum" in the Bryan Press, "Monday A.M. was undoubtedly the most profane morning Bryan has ever observed. Every man

stepping into every restaurant had almost the identical description of the Japanese, and it was not a pretty sentiment with lace on it."

Americans stayed close to their radios again on Monday to hear President Franklin D. Roosevelt's request to Congress for a declaration of war against Japan and Germany, and to call Sunday "A day that will live in infamy."

Steps were immediately taken to put Bryan on some sort of war footing. The Aro Equipment Corporation was notified by the War Department that the firm should double its protection, and take precautions against sabotage. Bryans amateur pilots were grounded, and only government and commercial planes were allowed in the air. Locked gates were installed at doorways to the Bryan Municipal Light and Water plant, on government orders. The draft age was immediately extended by Washington officials to include men between the ages of 28 and 35.

Mayor Charles Ames announced the formation of a Bryan Defense Council, and appointed C. L. Newcomer as executive director.

Convoys of every type of military vehicle soon appeared on Bryan streets, and the long lines of Army vehicles became a familiar sight as Bryan police cleared the traffic off the routes as the caravans rolled through town.

Instructions relative to the procedure to be followed in the event of air raids were printed in the newspapers, and civilians, manufacturers, schools and churches were asked to clip the directions and display them prominently.

The Bryan Red Cross Chapter held its first meeting in its new quarters in the Elder building on North Lynn Street, and named Dr. D. S. Teters to continue as chairman.

Plans for the usual observance of Christmas went ahead. The Defense Council requested that social functions avoid any unnecessary expense, and lavish Christmas decorations were discouraged.

Officials at Camp Shelby, Miss., where many Bryan servicemen were sent for training, appealed to parents and friends of Ohio soldiers to write warm, friendly letters to the boys in camp, pointing out the soldiers preferred cheer and laughter to tears, wailings and forebodings as subject matter in their letters.

The grim realities of war lay ahead that first December - hundreds of Bryan youths sent to fight in many parts of the world, battles, casualties, and defeats. For the civilians, rationing of everyday necessities, shortages of raw materials and consumer goods, the change to war production by industries, jobs in war plants, constant concern over the progress of the war and the safety of relatives and friends, sacrifices, and grief.

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The story of postwar Bryan has been one of continuing change, growth, improvement and progress. In the twenty years since the end of World War II, Bryan's population has increased 50 per cent, and is nearing the 8,000 figure. With the influx of new residents the city has changed to keep pace with its growth.

New schools, both public and parochial, churches, parks and playgrounds have been built. A branch of Bowling Green State University provides higher education for the youth of the area.

The city's services have been greatly expanded with the erection of new facilities at the light, water and sewage plants. The police and fire departments have been modernized and upgraded. The Ohio Gas Company and General Telephone Company have extended their services along with the city's growth.

Several diversified industries have started here since the war, including Champion Molded Plastics, Hayes Industries, Inc. (Fifty Division), Challenge-Cook Bros. of Ohio, Inc., Bryan Metals, Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company, JBM Tool and Die Corporation, and the Bricker Plating Company.

A number of other new plants have begun operation, including Allied Moulded Products, Anderson-Vreeland Midwest, Hootman Aluminum Foundry, Wheaton Pattern Works, Romanoff Electric Motors, Fox Brothers Manufacturing, Ohio Tool and Forge Company, Trinc Company, and Bryan Die Cast Products, Inc.

Existing industries have undertaken impressive expanson programs, such as at The Aro Corporaton, Ohio Art Company, Spangler Candy Company, Bard Manufacturing Company, Holabird Company, Pet Milk Company, Paul B. Elder Company, and the Bryan Canning Company.

The downtown area has been improved by the widening of streets, construction of the North Main Street underpass, new lighting, and the installation of parking meters. The appearance of the downtown section has been bettered by the construction of new stores and the modernization and remodeling of older business houses.

A large addition has recently been completed at the Bryan Post Office, and a new children's wing has been added to the Bryan Public Library. Bryan's two national banks have been completely modernized, including the convenience of drive-in servce. Two new savings and loan branches have been opened here. Cameron Memorial Hospital is in the process of constructing a 45 bed wing.

On the outskirts of town a new all-weather airport is in operation. Another nine holes for golf have been added at Orchard Hills Country Club.

The Bryan Times, a daily newspaper, was introduced, and radio station WBNO went on the air. The Community Concert Series has been successful in Bryan for more than ten years, and the Kiwanis Travelogue Series has received excellent response.

The Bryan Chamber of Commerce, successor to the Bryan Business Men's Association, is an effective instrument in the progress of the city, and Bryan Properties, Inc., has been organized to provide sites for new industries.

Supermarkets, motels, a drive-in movie, a shopping center, a large bowling alley, and several new restaurants and service stations have all appeared since World War II.

In 1965, more than ever before, Bryan is the shopping, culture, recreational and employment center for the 35,000 to 40,000 population retail trading area which it serves.

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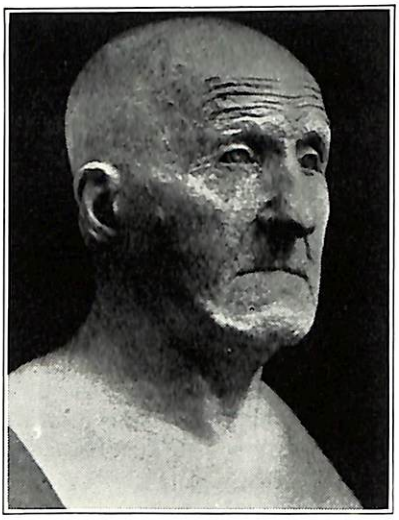

John A. Bryan — State Auditor of Ohio

proposed to the State Legislature that the county seat of Williams County be moved nearer the geographical center of the county.

Miller Arrowsmith, completed a survey of the townsite in July, 1840, and the plat was recorded September 14, of that year. Arrowsmith named the site Bryan, in honor of its promoter, John A. Bryan.